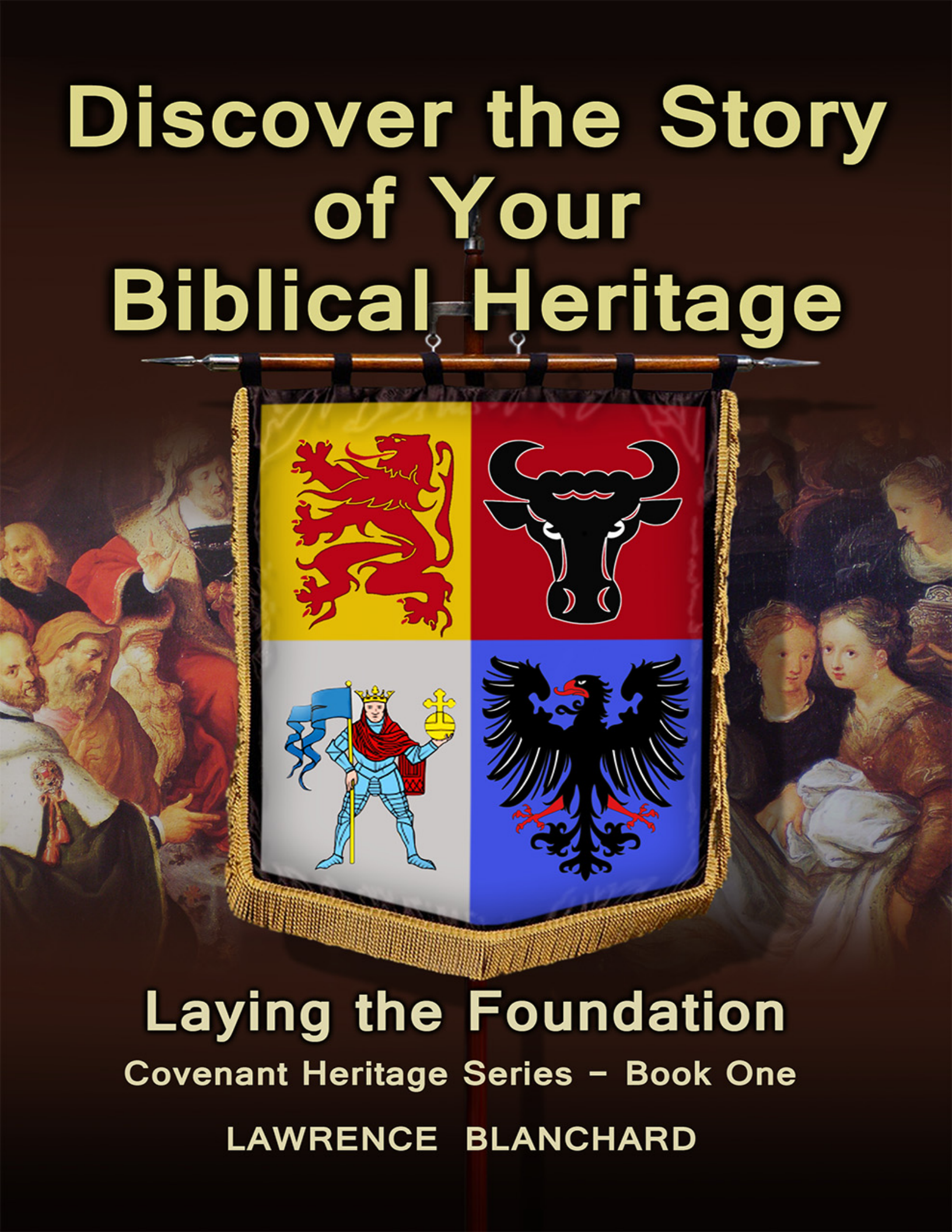
Discover the Story of Your Biblical Heritage



Laying the Foundation

Covenant Heritage Series – Book One

LAWRENCE BLANCHARD

Discover the Story of Your Biblical Heritage

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A word to KJV folk: We are aware that there are many who believe that the *King James Version* (KJV) of the Bible should be the only version that is used. We respect that belief and conviction. However, we hope that because we have chosen to use the *New American Standard Bible* (NASB) in this book series, that that will not dissuade you to partake in reading it. We encourage you to check out every Bible reference with the KJV to see if there are any substantial discrepancies.

All bold notations are the author's except where it is in an original quoted text from another source and will be indicated by "Emphasis in the original."

Cover background painting: by Frans II Franken, "King Solomon meets the Queen of Sheba," painted in between the years 1606 and 1617.

Maps and artwork: Johannes Verhoeff

For more information on the *Covenant Heritage Series*, please logon to: www.YourBiblicalHeritage.com

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Dedication

For the honor and glory of the God of
Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

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Introduction

About the *Covenant Heritage Series*

The *Covenant Heritage Series* is comprised of seven books that will help you build knowledge, understanding and relevance regarding the heritage of the covenant people of God. As you will see, this heritage has been lost or hidden from the modern day teaching of the Bible and the pages of history. However, this series boldly and joyfully reveals and proclaims this God-ordained heritage to the people to whom it belongs.

Why is heritage important? Is **your** heritage important to you? We tend to live in the moment with little, if any, regard for our past heritage. But whether we know it or not, whether we try to ignore it or not, we are the products of our history in and through our ancestors. Knowledge of our heritage reveals who we are and who we're supposed to be. It reveals what we've been given as an inheritance. And, by implication, it reveals our present and future purpose in life.

Most of us have been taught that our heritage is not important to living in the present. But the truth is, living in the present is relatively meaningless without the knowledge and understanding of your purpose that has its roots in your heritage – your family history. And life is void of meaning in the present unless from that heritage you realize your destiny.

To live with ultimate meaning and purpose, to know without a doubt who you are and what you were created for comes together

in your past heritage, your present life and your future destiny. Where do you begin to find your biblical heritage?

Where Do We Start?

We begin with a basic question: What does the Bible say and what does it mean by what it says? That's what Book One, *Discover the Story of Your Biblical Heritage*, and the subsequent books in the *Covenant Heritage Series* attempt to answer.

Would you be willing to take a **fresh look** at the Old and New Covenant Scriptures to discover for yourself what the word of God actually says and consider what it means by what it says?

There is not a more significant question that must be satisfactorily answered for every person – Christian or not. Of course, if you already are unmistakably confident that you have grasped for yourself the unity and consistency of what the whole Bible says and means from beginning to end, then you will have no need for reading this book. Or, perhaps you are satisfied with what you have been told to believe by recognized hierarchies in the "church" and by trusted "scholars" who have, more or less, come to a consensus of opinion about what they **think** the Bible says and means. If so, you will have no reason to read this book.

Who Is this Book For?

If, on the other hand, you do have questions and some doubt in your mind as to what the Bible says and what it means by what it says, and if you feel you have not been satisfied enough to confidently understand it for yourself, **then this book is for you**. Perhaps you have thought or felt that the Bible doesn't fully add up or make complete sense. **Then this book is for you**.

Beyond that, this book is for those who really want to find out for themselves what the message and meaning of the Scripture is. If you seek hard after the truth and hold on to the truth based on the evidence discovered for yourself, even if it means rethinking what you previously believed or had been told the Bible said and meant, **then this book is for you**.

It's for those who are courageous enough to think and believe differently from the present day "orthodox"[1] systems and traditions even if it means the ridicule and rejection of family and friends.

> Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. – Matthew 5:11-12

Though personal conviction of truth is often costly, Jesus Christ did say we would be "blessed" and to "rejoice."

It will be a test of character and personal integrity to hold to a view contrary to the majority if you find the evidence to warrant a change of thinking. But as someone once said, "The truth is the truth even if no one believes it, and a lie is a lie even if everyone believes it."

The Old and New

Please rest assured that this book and the books in this series do not abandon **historical and biblically evidenced** doctrines of Christianity. Indeed, these books hold firmly to the Bible as God-breathed and other core teachings such as the sacrificial blood atonement of Christ Jesus and justification by grace through faith alone.

On the other hand, these books do challenge the liberal and present day "conservative" opinions of our time that render a radically different picture about what the Bible says and what it means by what it says, as you will see. It will challenge the "orthodox" consensus opinion that has become an **assumed**[2] set of biblical "facts." Of course, these are vehemently guarded as sacred. But still, the issue is, does the consensus opinion agree with what the Bible actually says or not? Is it verified by the evidence of Scripture with the fewest contradictions?

How to Read and Study this Book

If you want to get the most out this book, here are some helpful suggestions:

- Start at the beginning and read it through page by page.
- Set aside sufficient time to read and study one chapter at a time with a Bible in hand.
- Though you can go through this book on your own, you might benefit from partnering up with your spouse, friend or even a small study group. But be sure they have the same open mind and are committed to considering the facts objectively. Get that commitment to do so first.
- Make sure you do not go beyond a word you do not understand. This book was carefully written to highlight the definitions of certain words so you can better understand the meaning of words and their application.
- Make sure you go back to a previous section or chapter if necessary and reread it until you feel you have a firm grasp of what is written before you proceed to the next.

- Take time to ponder and answer the questions at the end of each chapter. They are designed to help you review what you have read and studied, and confirm your own conclusions.

In other words, don't rush through this book. It's foundational to understanding what the Bible says and sets the groundwork for the rest of the books in this series. Take the time to absorb it, think about it, and test it.

Unique Approach to the Bible

The Bible is a true story. It's not just a collection of interesting stories, events and people. It's essentially the story of one man's family traced and recorded down through the ages. It's a history that reveals God's unfolding plan and purpose for this family, which in turn develops a clearer and larger picture of God's will and grand design for the sake of His own Name and Glory.

This book, therefore, proposes to answer the question, "What does the Bible say and what does it mean by what it says?" by following this unfolding story and piecing together the key characters and elements of that story to present a picture of the whole purpose of God. "The sum of Your word is truth ..." (Psalm 119:160).

Unlike typical approaches, often called "systematic theology," that take small sections gathered from the biblical text to arrive at isolated conclusions of doctrine (such as the doctrine of salvation called Soteriology or the doctrine of Jesus Christ called Christology), this approach captures the broader, sequential[3] context of the continuing unfolding storyline that is the progressive revelation of God throughout time.

Another unique distinction of this book is that it presents this biblical story as a unified whole with an unforced consistency of the people and covenants continually advancing God's unchanging purpose by God's sovereign hand of grace. This is in contrast to relatively modern, but popular, versions of a theological framework that divide the plan of God through the ages into theoretical "dispensations" and imagined "gaps." This is also in contrast to the teaching that biblical interpretation is based on each individual's personal conclusions or opinions (II Peter 1:20-21).

This book (and the following series of books) does, however, stay within the bounds of the well-accepted principles of interpretation of the Bible. The two fundamental ones are: 1) that the Bible is more accurately and safely understood in its own context and, 2) when the Bible is allowed to interpret itself. These two basic principles underlie the guiding process that will be critical to answering the question about what the Bible actually says.

A Personal Message

Even though modern Bible teaching and preaching is primarily focused on personal application, and pastors and teachers strive to make it personally relevant to others, true individual significance is lost without understanding the full context of the word of God. The Bible was not written primarily to individuals although it does have individual, personal application ("How do I live my life now?"). But, what the Bible says and what it means has a much larger context. It is a **national message** of which an individual is a part of the whole.

Within that national message lies the greater personal message of true and lasting relevance. That a man or woman finds himself or herself as a vital part of a greater unfolding purpose of the Kingdom of God is the high road of finding personal significance and eternal purpose, which cannot be equaled.

Jesus commanded us to "**seek first His kingdom** and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33). But how can we seek His Kingdom if we don't know and understand what it is and our place in it? This book introduces the national context of the Kingdom of God consistently through the biblical covenants assigned throughout the story of one man's family.

Significance for Our Time

This book will lay the foundation for a biblical perspective of the consequences of a rapidly deteriorating moral, economic and political system not just in America, but in the rest of the "civilized world." In order to understand why we are going through increasingly severe difficulties, we must understand biblical history and how it relates to us. Through evidence-based conclusions of fact in this book, and the ones that follow, you may begin to catch a glimpse of why we have "gone off the rails," so to speak, and what must be done to repent and return to do the will of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

These conclusions are not difficult to understand, but may be the ultimate challenge to accept. If, however, you discover they are true, correct and certain, there is no other choice but to accept them unless, of course, you find the personal cost too great. If you

want results and want to be a part of a real change of direction that seeks first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, consider carefully what this book and the books that follow present.

This book, and the rest of the books in this series, will not interest those who have concluded that nothing can be done to remedy our deteriorating conditions because, after all, "we are in the end times" and everything is going to get worse anyway. If that is true, why do anything at all beyond the survival of yourself and family and maybe get motivated to get as many "saved" as possible?

If you also believe that things will turn around only if God directly intervenes by a massive global display of His presence and power "when Jesus comes back," and that we are powerless to do anything apart from this direct action of God, then this book will not interest you.

If, on the other hand, you believe that the true local church is the dwelling place of God by His Spirit and the church is His "body" to fulfill His "eternal purpose…so that the manifold wisdom of God might **now** be made known **through the church** to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 3:10-11), then read on. If you believe that God the Father in Christ Jesus is "far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come, and He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things **to the church, which is His body**, the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (Ephesians 1:21-23) and that Jesus promised "I will

build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it" (Matthew 16:18), then read on.

If you do not yet realize, at least in some small degree, that the problems and issues of our time have consequences with critical outcomes, then there may be little reason to read this book. However, if you are aware enough to know that:

- murder, rape and drugs are continuing to increase,
- prisons are overflowing,
- sexual perversion is rampant,
- politicians and judges are largely compromised and many are corrupt,
- the economic debt is unmanageable and unsolvable in the present system (that is, there is "no mathematical solution" or "market solution" to pay it off),
- we are daily poisoned by "dead" food laced with chemicals, preservatives, pesticides and herbicides, not to mention environmental pollution introducing more chemicals and heavy metal poisoning,

then you may want to consider this book seriously as a study of what the Bible says and what it means by what it says.

What Is this Book About?

This is a foundational study that tells the true story about one man and his physical offspring. It's the story about how God revealed Himself and specially chose Abraham and his descendants through Isaac and Jacob to establish His Kingdom on earth. It's the story of God's faithful covenant relationship

with this chosen covenant family. It connects all the significant points of history and covenants from Abraham to Jesus Christ, helping you make sense about what the Bible says. And it shows why the vast majority of the churches today have misunderstood God's purpose and plan to establish His Kingdom in righteousness and justice. When you complete this book, you may never read or study the Bible in the same way again.

Okay, here you go. Are you ready to start discovering what the Bible says and what it means by what it says? Be like a Berean[4] and examine everything that is written here very carefully.

And one more piece of counsel, to get the most out of this book and the remainder of the books in this series as they interact with God's word: **Read the Bible as if you were reading it for the very first time.** To do that, you may need to temporarily set aside what you have come to believe the Bible says and what it means by what it says and consciously put your beliefs on the shelf. Examine the Scriptures afresh. You may just discover new truths that you have never seen before.

> … and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.
> – John 8:32

In the quest for truth, may the Spirit of truth make His revelation and wisdom known to you.

Lawrence Blanchard
December 2012

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God's Covenant Promises to Abraham

The Starting Place

In order to more easily grasp what the Bible says and what it means by what it says, we begin with God's promises to Abram (later renamed Abraham) as revealed in Genesis 12. As you will discover, the story of the Bible flows from this important patriarch down through history connecting the biblical covenants and God's chosen people together in a unified, unforced consistency. From Genesis 12 through the New Covenant (Testament) Scriptures, we will see Abraham as the critical foundation upon which to build a true, correct and certain understanding of the biblical story.

Why Not Start in Genesis 1?

You may be asking this question: Why start in Genesis 12 and not chapter 1? It does seem logical to start at the beginning of the Bible, doesn't it? Genesis 1-11 is very important to understanding what the Bible says and what it means by what it says, and we certainly want to study these beginning chapters of the Scripture in our search for the truth about what God has revealed. And we will do so in Book Four of this series, *God's Covenant Creation*.

We don't start with Genesis 1-11 for two reasons. First, there are a lot of differing and emotionally-charged beliefs and issues about the creation story (Genesis 1-2) and Noah's Flood (Genesis 6-8), for example. If we started there, we feel we would have to address the many varied Christian and non-Christian perspectives about these chapters and this would only serve to distract us from our objective to tell the overall biblical story as simply and directly as possible.

Second, we believe that the first eleven chapters of Genesis are most accurately understood if the rest of the Bible (Genesis 12 – Revelation) is first understood. In other words, in keeping with the two basic principles of interpretation of the Bible – 1) that the Bible is best understood in its context, and 2) when it's allowed to interpret itself (Scripture interprets Scripture) – we believe that Genesis 1-11 can be read with a more definite understanding by bringing the light of the rest of Scripture to shine upon it. Just like trying to understand any portion of the Bible that stands alone, whether a verse or a chapter, apart from considering the rest of the Bible, there is likewise an increased hazard of misinterpretation of Genesis 1-11 when it stands alone.

So, we begin with Genesis 12 and we'll take what we learn and eventually come back to Genesis 1-11. We think you will find that the knowledge you gain from this approach will give you greater insight and wisdom when we examine Genesis 1-11 in Book Four of this series, *God's Covenant Creation*.

The First Two Promises to Abram

Genesis 12 begins with God's call to Abram to leave his relatives and the land where he was living and go to another land that God

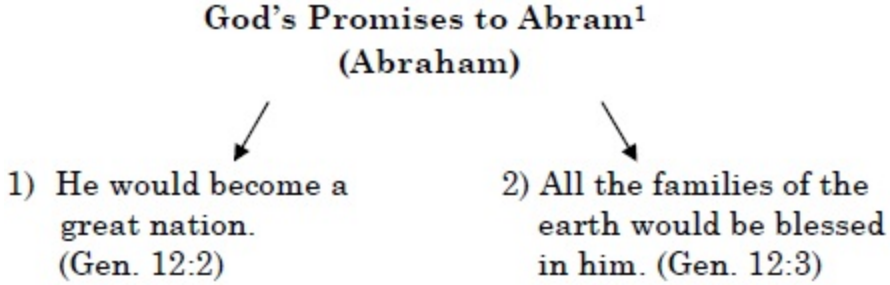
would show to him (12:1):

> Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you…"

We'll get to "the land" part of it shortly. After that call, God made two promises to Abram:

1. That He would make him **a great nation**, and
2. That **in him all the families of the earth would be blessed**.

> And **I will make you a great nation**, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And **in you all the families of the earth will be blessed**. – Genesis 12:2-3


God's Promises to Abram[1]
(Abraham)
1) He would become a great nation. (Gen. 12:2)
2) All the families of the earth would be blessed in him. (Gen. 12:3)

So, Abram obeyed the voice of the Lord God and left for "the land of Canaan" (Genesis 12:4-5). This land was called Canaan because the Canaanite lived in that land (Genesis 12:6).

The Promises to Abram about His Descendants

Over the course of time, after Abram settled in the land of Canaan (Genesis 13:12), God made two more promises to Abram and his descendants:

3. That they would **possess the land of Canaan**, and
4. That Abram's descendants would comprise a **multitude of people** – like the dust of the earth.

> The LORD said to Abram..."Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; **for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever. I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered**." – Genesis 13:14-16

Many years later, God repeated His promise to Abraham[2] in two other ways:

> Indeed I will greatly bless you, and **I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore**... – Genesis 22:17

According to God's promise, Abraham's descendants would possess the land of Canaan and become a multitude of people like the dust of the earth, the stars of the heavens and the sand which is on the seashore. In other words, they would become many, many people too numerous to count.

From the basic Hebrew and Greek meaning as noted on the next page, it seems clear that "descendants" or "seed" (Hebrew: *zera*; Greek: *sperma*) often refers to **physical offspring**, that is, sons and daughters, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and so forth.

Meaning of Words:

What does "descendants" or "seed" mean? "Descendants" is translated from the Hebrew word *zera*. – *Strong's Hebrew Dictionary* #2233

Definition: *zera*, seed; figurative fruit, plant, sowing-time, posterity… – *Strong's Hebrew Dictionary*

In the *LXX* (*LXX* or Septuagint is the Greek version of the Old Testament): *sperma. – Strong's Greek Dictionary* #4690

Definition: *sperma;* from #4687; that which is sown, i.e. seed: [variously translated] conceive, descendant, offspring, posterity, seed, seeds. – *Strong's Greek Dictionary*

Sperma: Old Testament: *sperma*….in *LXX*…which literally refers to agronomic seed-sowing (Gen. 47:23) and to the flow of male semen (Lev. 15:16) ...*Sperma* in the sense of "offspring" or "posterity"…in citations of Old Testament promise texts which foretell the future blessing of the descendants of Abraham (Lk. 1:55, Acts 7:5, Rom. 9:7, Heb. 11:18). – Colin Brown, Ed., *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Vol. III, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1971, p. 521-523

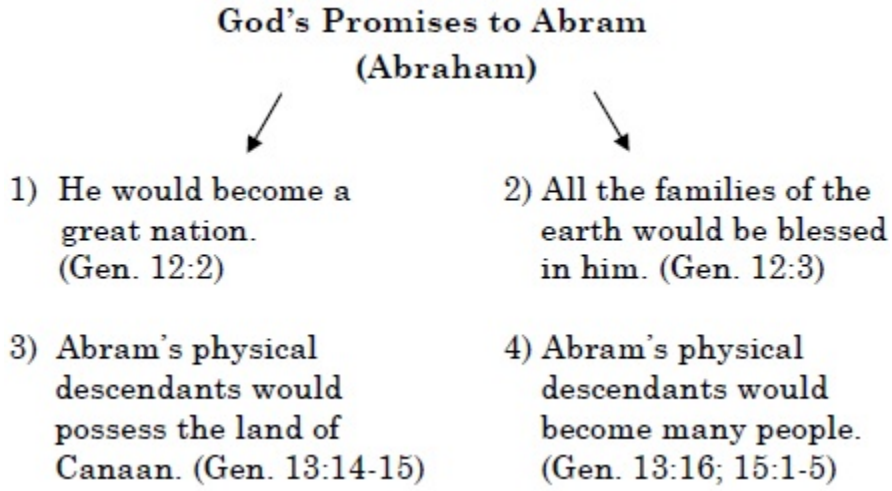
Can this meaning of "descendants" as physical offspring be verified in the Bible? Let's look at Genesis 15:1-5.

> After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; your reward shall be very great." Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will You give me, since **I am childless**, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "Since You have given no **offspring** to me, one born in my house is my heir." Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This man will not be your heir; but **one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir**." And He took him outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to him, "So shall **your descendants** be."

In this passage, Abram inquired of the Lord about the fact that he had no child or "offspring" of his own. "Offspring" is the same Hebrew word *zera* (and Greek word *sperma*) as in Genesis 13:15 and 15:5 (translated "descendants" in these verses in the NASB). The Lord replied that Abram would have a child "from your own body." Furthermore, the Lord verified the promise that Abram's descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the

night sky (later repeated in Genesis 22:17). Logically, if Abram was to have a child from his "own body," that would be a **literal, physical offspring or descendant.** Abram would be the father of that physical child. So, the word "offspring" or "descendants" (or "seed") in this context means the literal, physical children of Abram.

At this point, God's promises to Abram are as follows:


God's Promises to Abram
(Abraham)
1) He would become a great nation. (Gen. 12:2)
2) All the families of the earth would be blessed in him. (Gen. 12:3)
3) Abram's physical descendants would possess the land of Canaan. (Gen. 13:14-15)
4) Abram's physical descendants would become many people. (Gen. 13:16; 15:1-5)

Promise to Abraham Concerning the Nations

Of all the promises that God made to Abraham, this next one is, perhaps, the most important in terms of understanding what the Bible says and what it means by what it says. This promise that God made to Abraham was that he would "be the father of a multitude of nations" (Genesis 17:4). This promise was made also by "covenant":

> Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be blameless. I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you exceedingly." Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, "As for Me, behold, **My covenant is with you, and you will be the father of a**

> **multitude of nations**. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for **I will make you the father of a multitude of nations**."– Genesis 17:1-5

To begin to grasp the significance of this covenant promise, let's define the word "nations" and how it is variously translated in other parts of the Bible.

Meaning of Words:

What does "nations" mean? "Nations" is translated from the Hebrew word *goy*. – *Strong's Hebrew Dictionary* #1471

Goy can be translated by the following words: Gentile, heathen, nation, people. So *goy* can be translated either Gentile or heathen or nation or people.

Goy. Gentile, heathen, nation, people… It is difficult to ascertain the exact definition of the term. However, if one takes the various usages into consideration...one must conclude that **the basic idea is that of a defined body or group of people**, or some specific large segment of a given body. **The <u>context</u> will generally indicate the specific quality or characteristic which is to be understood**… The term *goy* is used especially to refer to specifically defined political, ethnic or territorial groups of people without intending to ascribe a specific religious or moral connotation. – Harris, Archer, Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament,* Vol. I, Chicago, IL: The Moody Bible Institute, 1980, pp. 153-154

There are two points here about the Hebrew word *goy*. First, it is variously translated "nation," "Gentile," "heathen" or "people" depending on the translator's choice. In other words, the word "nation" is interchangeable with the word "Gentile." We have been taught that the word "Gentile" means someone who is not a "Jew." But that is incorrect. It's simply another word for "nation."

Nation = Gentile

Second, the **context** determines the specific meaning of the word "nation" (or "Gentile"), who it applies to and how it's understood. In other words, if you want to understand who "nation" or "Gentile" refers to, it must be determined from the context in which it is used.

There is another helpful English definition of "nation" that we can use to determine what it means. Consider the original definition of this word:

> ***Nation*, as its etymology[3] imports, originally denoted a family or race of men descended from a common progenitor**, like *tribe*, but by emigration, conquest and intermixtures of men of different families, this distinction is in most countries lost. – Noah Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language,* Vol. I, New Haven, CT: S. Converse, 1828, (emphasis added in part)

We have highlighted for emphasis the fact that the "etymology" (or origin of the word) of "nation" is "a family or race of men descended from a common progenitor."[4] Of course, "nation" has all but lost that original meaning due to foreign immigration and political identity such as the United Nations. That's how we think of the word today – not a race of people, but many races in a specific country, regardless of race.

If we take this original English definition and the context of Genesis 17:1-5, there are definite clues as to how "nations" is used and applied. For example, God told Abraham that he would be "the **father** of a multitude of **nations**." The Hebrew word for "father" is *ab*. The word is used overwhelmingly in the Old Covenant Scriptures in "kinship terms…[with]…the basic meaning '(natural) father (of his children)'"[5] and often can refer to

father, grandfather, great-grandfather and so forth. Furthermore, the context tells us that God would "establish My covenant between Me and you [Abraham] and **your descendants** after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant" (Genesis 17:7). The word "descendants" or "seed" in other translations is the same word we discussed previously meaning physical descendants (Genesis 13:14-16, 15:1-5 and 22:17). So, the facts of the context of "nation" or "nations" indicate that **the promised "nations" that would come from Abraham would be his physical descendants.**

This is an important point, as you will discover in future chapters, because there is a major religious **assumption** today that "Gentiles" means people who are not the physical descendants of Abraham. When the translators use the word "Gentiles," they are implying this **interpretation** which may not be accurate. In the case and context of God's promise to Abraham that he would become the father of many "nations," the meaning and application of "nations" (or "Gentiles") as anyone other than his physical offspring, cannot be true.

This **assumed definition** of "Gentiles" in modern day Christian theology forces the translators of the Hebrew word *goy* (*goyim* – plural) to use "nations" instead of "Gentiles." Imagine if Genesis 17:5 read this way: "I will make you the father of many Gentiles." Can you see where that would cause confusion in the mind of the reader? If it is **assumed** that "Gentiles" does not refer to the physical descendants of Abraham, then "Gentiles" would not fit the context of Genesis 17:1-5[6] since the context clearly refers to "nations" as his physical descendants.

"Nations" (or "Gentiles"), in the context of Genesis 17:1-5, means the physical descendants of Abraham. By the way, the word "Gentiles" is from the Latin word *gentilis*.[7] Let's look at the origin and meaning of the word:

Meaning of Words:

Gentilis, adj. family, hereditary; tribal; national; m. (masculine noun) clansman, kinsman. – John C. Traupman, *The New College Latin & English Dictionary,* New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1981, p. 122

Another important derivative of *genere* is the n. *gens*, originally, "**the group of all those who, in the male line, descend from a common (free) male ancestor**," hence a clan. The adj. is *gentilis*, belonging to the clan, hence in Late Latin (180-600 A.D.), a non-Roman, a foreigner, and in Late to Medieval Latin (600-1500 A.D.) a non-Jew, a non-Christian. – Eric Partridge, *A Short Etymological Dictionary of Modern English*, 2nd Ed., New York, NY: Macmillan Co., 1959, p. 250

As you can see, originally *gentilis* referred to a family line and meant the same as the word "nation."

A Word about "Covenant"

Before we move on to the remaining promises to Abraham, let's discuss this all-important word "covenant." God made a "covenant" with Abraham:

> I will establish My **covenant** between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting **covenant**, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. – Genesis 17:7

First, we notice several things about what this verse says: God was making a "covenant" with Abraham and his descendants (that is, his physical offspring), and it was going to be "an

everlasting covenant." The covenant promise was that God was going to make Abraham the father of many nations and it was going to be a perpetual covenant to be manifested or fulfilled in Abraham's physical descendants. The Hebrew word for "everlasting" is *olam* which means "long duration, antiquity, futurity" (*Strong's Hebrew Dictionary* #5769). Psalm 105:8-9 emphasizes this "everlasting" covenant:

> He has remembered His covenant **forever**, the word which He commanded to **a thousand generations**...which He made with Abraham...

In other words, it was to be a perpetual covenant for many, many future generations in the family line of Abraham.

This "covenant" was given to Abraham **and** his descendants. Let's look closer at the word itself.

Meaning of Words:

What does "covenant" mean? "Covenant" is translated from the Hebrew word *berith*. – *Strong's Hebrew Dictionary* #1285

A compact (because made by passing between pieces of flesh) which is explained below.

Another authoritative source says that covenant is defined as: 1. *alliance* of friendship... 2. covenant, as a divine constitution or ordinance with signs and pledges. – F. Brown, S. Driver, C. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon,* Peabody: MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2001, p. 136

The word "covenant" as translated from the Hebrew word *berith* is used throughout the Old Covenant portion of the Bible in the context of an agreement "made in conjunction with the ceremonial death of an animal".[8] There is no exact word that

gives this definition, but the word "covenant" is associated in context with blood sacrifice as explained in Genesis 15:1-21. In this story, God Himself passed through the pieces of sacrificial animals and cut, or made, a "covenant" (v. 18) on behalf of Abraham as a sign and pledge to him that He would fulfill certain promises. It was an **unconditional covenant** made by God Himself. It's worth reading this story for yourself. One author said it well when he defined covenant as "...a bond-in-blood."[9]

This idea of a biblical covenant extends throughout Scripture and plays a significant truth in the unfolding plan of God in and through His covenant people. We will come back to this important covenant concept later in this book.

The Final Two Promises to Abraham

The next promise to Abraham is also found in Genesis 17:6: "kings will come forth from you." In other words, from the descendants of Abraham would come rulers or kings. We'll see this expanded and fulfilled more specifically in Book Three*, The Foundation and Fulfillment of the Old and New Covenant Scriptures.*

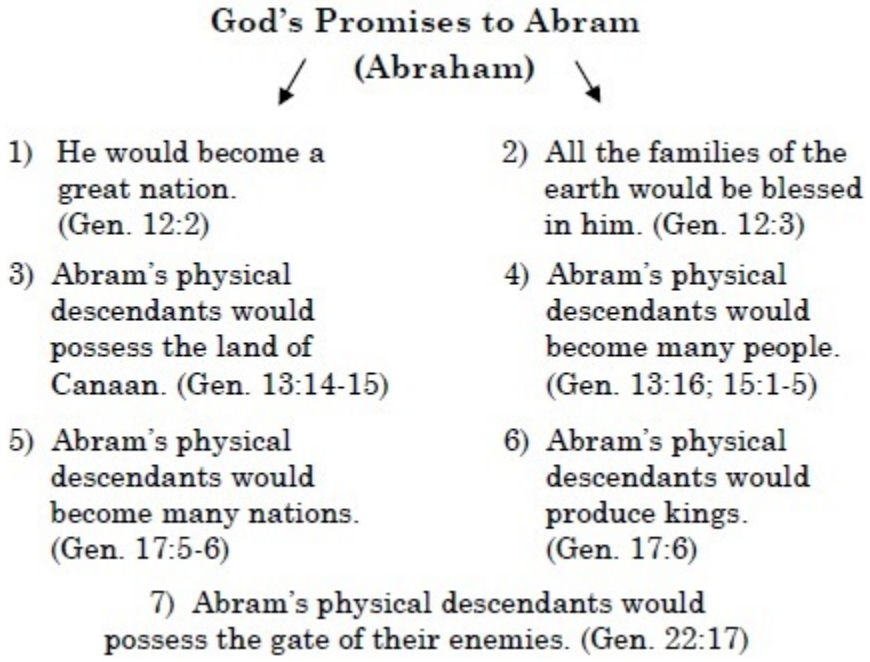
The final promise to Abraham is found in Genesis 22:17: "your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies." Scholar Adam Clarke commented on this phrase:

> By the gates may be meant all the strength, whether troops, counsels or fortified cites of their enemies.[10]

God's promise to Abraham was that his descendants would rule over and conquer their enemies. In other words, they would have dominion over their enemies.

Conclusion

Let's sum up these unconditional promises to Abraham:


God's Promises to Abram
(Abraham)
1) He would become a great nation. (Gen. 12:2)
2) All the families of the earth would be blessed in him. (Gen. 12:3)
3) Abram's physical descendants would possess the land of Canaan. (Gen. 13:14-15)
4) Abram's physical descendants would become many people. (Gen. 13:16; 15:1-5)
5) Abram's physical descendants would become many nations. (Gen. 17:5-6)
6) Abram's physical descendants would produce kings. (Gen. 17:6)
7) Abram's physical descendants would possess the gate of their enemies. (Gen. 22:17)

The unity and consistency of the entire Bible begins with these unconditional, everlasting covenant promises to Abraham and his physical descendants. Keep in mind the meaning and application of the word "nation" or "nations." Understanding this will help you to put the pieces of the Bible together and you will begin to see God's word as you have never seen it before. You will see the Bible story unfold before your very eyes and it will really begin to make sense.

In the next chapter, we'll discover who inherited these powerful, unconditional, everlasting covenant promises.

What Did You Learn? Test Yourself.

1. List the covenant promises made to Abraham (Abram) by God.

a. Abraham would become a great _____ (see here).

b. Abraham would be a blessing to all the _____ of the earth (see here).

c. Abraham and his descendants would possess the land of _____ (see here).

d. From Abraham would come many _____ (see here).

e. From Abraham would come a multitude of _____ (see here).

f. From Abraham _____ would come forth (see here).

g. Abraham's descendants would possess the gate of their _____ (see here).

2. What other common Latin word taken from the Latin Vulgate Bible is translated the same as "nation" (see here)?

_____

3. God made a conditional covenant with Abraham (see here).

True or False

Question to Think About

Suppose you wanted to find out if you were one of the physical descendants of Abraham who would inherit the covenant promises given to Abraham. Based on the promises themselves, what clues would you expect to find to confirm whether you were one of those descendants?

2

God's Covenant Promises Inherited by Isaac and Jacob

As we learned in the first chapter, God made a series of magnificent, unconditional and everlasting promises to Abraham by covenant. These promises were also to be inherited and fulfilled in his physical descendants. This chapter will examine the portions of Scripture that reveal that it was Abraham's son Isaac and grandson Jacob who would inherit these covenant promises. The inheritance was by God's sovereign[1] choice, as you will see.

God's Promise of a Son

As you recall in the previous chapter, God assured Abram (later renamed Abraham) that he would have a natural born son from his "own body" (Genesis 15:4). This son would be Abram's "heir" of the covenant promises.

In the course of time, Abram and his wife Sarai (later renamed Sarah), still did not have any child of their own. Sarai, desiring the fulfillment of this promise that Abram would have a son, decided to give her maidservant, Hagar, to him in order that he might finally obtain a son.

> Now Sarai, Abram's wife had borne him no children, and she had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar. So Sarai said to Abram, "Now behold, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children. Please go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children through her." And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai…And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her sight. – Genesis 16:1-2, 4

The son Hagar bore to Abram was named Ishmael.

> So Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. And Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to him. – Genesis 16:15-16

Thirteen years later, when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord again reaffirmed His covenant to him and changed his name from Abram to Abraham, because God was going to make him "the father of a multitude of nations."

> No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be **Abraham**: for I will make you **the father of a multitude of nations**. – Genesis 17:5

Abraham means "to be populous; father of a multitude" (*Strong's Hebrew Dictionary* #85).

Also, at this time, God told Abraham that the name of his wife Sarai would be changed to Sarah, because she would "be a mother of nations…"

> Then God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but **Sarah shall be her name**. And I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and **she shall be a mother of nations**; kings of peoples shall come from her." – Genesis 17:15-16

That Abram's name was changed to Abraham and Sarai's name was changed to Sarah reflected and confirmed that the

covenant promises would be fulfilled in and through a child of their own.

God's Choice of Isaac

Because Abraham and Sarah were childless and advanced in age well beyond childbearing years (Genesis 18:11), Abraham assumed Ishmael would be the heir of the covenant promises. However, God did not choose Ishmael as the heir, but rather the son Abraham would have with Sarah. His name was to be Isaac.

> Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, "Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" And Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before Thee!" But God said, "No, but **Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac**; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him." – Genesis 17:17-19

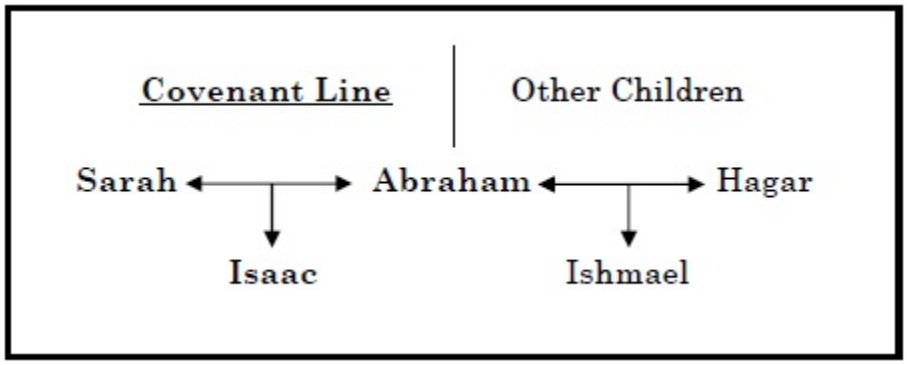
God would establish the "covenant" with Isaac, not Ishmael.

> **But my covenant I will establish with Isaac**, whom Sarah will bear to you at this season next year. – Genesis 17:21

Although Ishmael would become a great nation (Genesis 17:20), he would not be Abraham's heir. God chose Isaac.

One year later, Sarah gave birth to Isaac.

> So Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the appointed time of which God had spoken to him. And **Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac.** – Genesis 21:2-3



Covenant Promises Affirmed to Isaac

After Isaac grew to be a man, God affirmed three promises He gave to Abraham: 1) his descendants would occupy "these lands" (in Canaan), 2) his descendants would be multiplied "as the stars of the heavens," and 3) "the nations of the earth" would "be blessed" in his descendants (Genesis 26:3-4).

Furthermore, Isaac's wife Rebekah received two of the prophetic covenant promises: that her offspring would "become thousands of ten thousands," and "possess the gate of those who hate them" – that is, their enemies (Genesis 24:60). Thus, to Isaac and Rebekah were reaffirmed these covenant promises given to Abraham, as the diagram below summarizes.

God's Promises to Abram (Abraham)

↓

Inherited by Isaac

#2) All the families of the earth would be blessed in him. (Gen. 12:3)

#3) Abram's physical descendants would possess the land of Canaan. (Gen. 13:14-15)

#4) Abram's physical descendants would become many people. (Gen. 13:16; 15:1-5)

#7) Abram's physical descendants would possess the gate of their enemies. (Gen.22:17)

God's Choice of Jacob

After Isaac married Rebekah, like Abraham and Sarah, they could not have children of their own. However, Isaac prayed for his wife and "the Lord answered and Rebekah his wife conceived" (Genesis 25:21). The rest of the story is interesting and revealing, especially in regard to the word "nations."

Rebekah was pregnant with twins, but "the children struggled together within her" (Genesis 25:22). Inquiring of the Lord why this was so, the Lord explained the nature of the struggle:

> And the Lord said to her, "**Two nations** are in your womb; and **two peoples** shall be separated from your body; and one people shall be stronger than the other; and the older shall serve the younger."– Genesis 25:23

It was revealed that the conflict between the twins indicated "two nations" and "two peoples" who would be separated from each other. Here we again see the word translated "nations." As you might recall in the previous chapter, **a "nation" in the biblical and English definition means a people coming from a common set of parents. In the context, the "two nations" refer to the children to be born to Isaac and Rebekah.** Recall also that "nations" (Hebrew *goyim*) could be translated by the Latinized word "Gentiles." Same Hebrew word, but just the translator's choice of which word to use for *goyim* – "nations" or "Gentiles." So, Genesis 25:23 could have been translated: "Two Gentiles are in your womb."

As in the case of the promise to Abraham that his descendants would become "a multitude of nations," it would seem rather confusing to translate this Hebrew word "Gentiles" instead of "nations." If the translation read: "Two Gentiles are in your

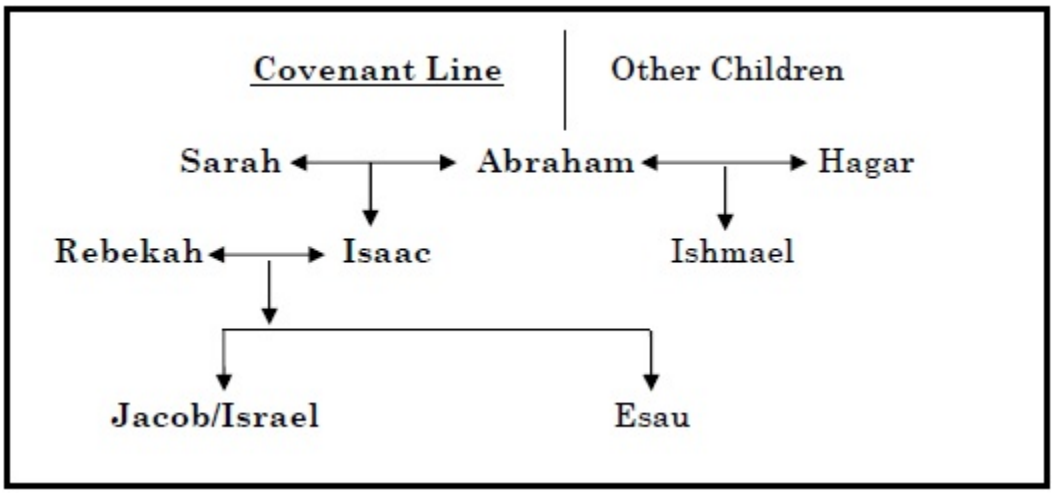
womb...” this would cause confusion because most people have been taught (at least in western Christianity) that there are only two types of people on the planet – Jews and Gentiles, and that “Gentiles” means everyone who is not a “Jew.” But that is not the definition of “Gentiles,” as we have already seen. “Gentiles” is simply the Latinized word for “nations.” But this will be explained more in depth in coming chapters. For now, it is important to understand simply that the twins in Rebekah’s womb represented “two nations” and “two peoples” that were to be separated.

The other part of the prophetic revelation to Rebekah was that one would be stronger than the other and the older of the children would serve the younger. In other words, one of the children would have dominion over the other.

As the time for giving birth arrived, Rebekah delivered two boys. Esau came out first (the older and firstborn) and then his brother Jacob (the younger). Traditionally, the birthright belonged to the firstborn male. The birthright represented the right to the family inheritance and, because Esau was born first, the birthright belonged to him. The birthright, in the context of Abraham and Isaac, represented the covenant promises. As the firstborn, these promises belonged to Esau.

However, according to the prophetic revelation received by Rebekah, it was to be Jacob, the younger brother of Esau, who was to have dominion rather than Esau. **God sovereignly chose Jacob to receive all the birthright promises.** The fascinating story about how all this took place is worth reading on your own (Genesis 25:24-34; 27:1-40).

So now we advance the next phase of Abraham's covenant family:



Covenant Promises Affirmed to Jacob

As Jacob grew into manhood, God revealed that he would inherit the covenant promises of his father Isaac and grandfather Abraham:

> And behold, the Lord … said, "I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; **the land** on which you lie [land of Canaan], **I will give it to you and to your descendants. Your descendants shall also be like the dust of the earth,** and you shall spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and in you and **in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed."** – Genesis 28:13-14

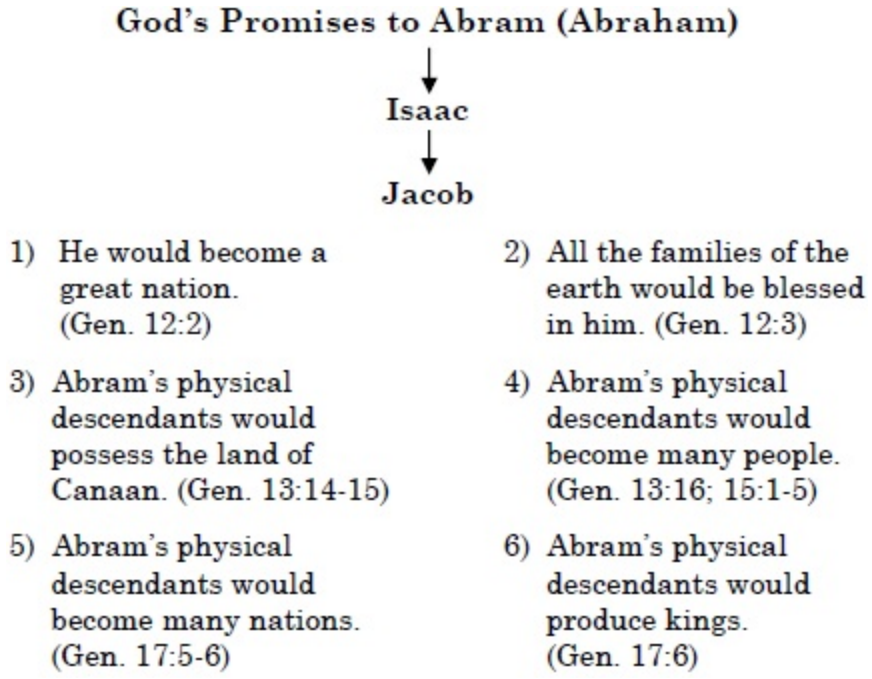
> Then God appeared to Jacob again when he came from Paddan-aram, and He blessed him. And God said to him, "Your name is Jacob; **you shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name."** Thus He called him Israel. God also said to him, "I am God Almighty; be fruitful and multiply; **a nation and a company of nations shall come from you,** and **kings shall come forth from you**. And **the land** which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, **I will give it to you,** and I will give the land **to your descendants after you**." – Genesis 35:9-12 (Also see Genesis

48:4 in the *LXX* or Septuagint where Jacob is repeating this promise to Joseph using the phrase "a multitude of nations.")

So, by God's reaffirming promise, Jacob's physical descendants would:

- Be a multitude of people like the dust of the earth;
- Be a blessing to all the families of the earth;
- Become a nation and a company of nations;
- Have kings come from them;
- Possess the land given to Abraham and Isaac.

The following diagram summarizes these covenant promises inherited by Jacob:


God's Promises to Abram (Abraham)
Isaac
Jacob
1) He would become a great nation. (Gen. 12:2)
2) All the families of the earth would be blessed in him. (Gen. 12:3)
3) Abram's physical descendants would possess the land of Canaan. (Gen. 13:14-15)
4) Abram's physical descendants would become many people. (Gen. 13:16; 15:1-5)
5) Abram's physical descendants would become many nations. (Gen. 17:5-6)
6) Abram's physical descendants would produce kings. (Gen. 17:6)

Conclusion

The promises given to Abraham and to his physical descendants by covenant from God were inherited by his son Isaac and

grandson Jacob, as also explained in Hebrews 11:8-9:

> By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with **Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise**.

In other words, Isaac and Jacob were within Abraham's body and they became "heirs," not only of possessing the land promised to Abraham, but by implication, of all the promises. And from Abraham to Isaac to Jacob, the inheritance was all by God's sovereign choice. God chose Abraham and his physical descendants, Isaac and Jacob, to receive the unconditional and everlasting covenant promises.

What Did You Learn? Test Yourself.

1. God chose Isaac instead of _____ to receive the inheritance of the covenant promises (see here).
2. God chose _____ instead of Esau to receive the inheritance of the covenant promises (see here).
3. Isaac and Jacob were the physical descendants of Abraham (see here.)

True False (Circle one)

Question to Think About

If God decided to choose Isaac over Ishmael and Jacob over Esau before they were born and before they could do anything bad or good, does that mean that God shows favoritism? Does that mean that God does not choose every person equally or love everyone

the same? From what you learned to this point, honestly answer these questions.

3

God's Covenant with Israel

Chapters one and two demonstrated that God called and chose Abraham to receive unconditional and everlasting covenant promises. These promises were likewise inherited by Abraham's physical offspring, his son Isaac (through Sarah), and his grandson Jacob. The covenant story continues now in and through Jacob's twelve sons and their physical descendants as God begins to call and make a covenant with them. They inherited the name of Israel because God changed Jacob's name to Israel (Genesis 32:28).

God's Faithfulness to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob

Due to a great famine, Jacob and eleven of his sons and their families were forced to move to Egypt where God provided for them through Jacob's son, Joseph. He had been sold by his brothers and was taken as a slave to Egypt where he rose to second in command after Pharaoh (Genesis chapters 41-47).

> Now these are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob; they came each one with his household: Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah; Issachar, Zebulun and Benjamin; Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. And all the persons who came from the loins of Jacob were seventy in number, but Joseph was already in Egypt. – Exodus 1:1-5

Over the course of many years, the descendants of Jacob/ Israel became many people (Exodus 1:7). Eventually they were put into the bondage of slavery to the Egyptians (Exodus 1:8-14). But "God heard their groaning; and **God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob**" (Exodus 2:24). Then, God Himself revealed to Moses His intention to deliver the children of Israel "from the power of the Egyptians" (Exodus 3:8). Please notice with whom God identified Himself to Moses right from the start:

> "**I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."** Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. And the Lord said, "I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings. So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite. And now, behold, the cry of the sons of Israel has come to Me; furthermore, I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them."– Exodus 3:6-9

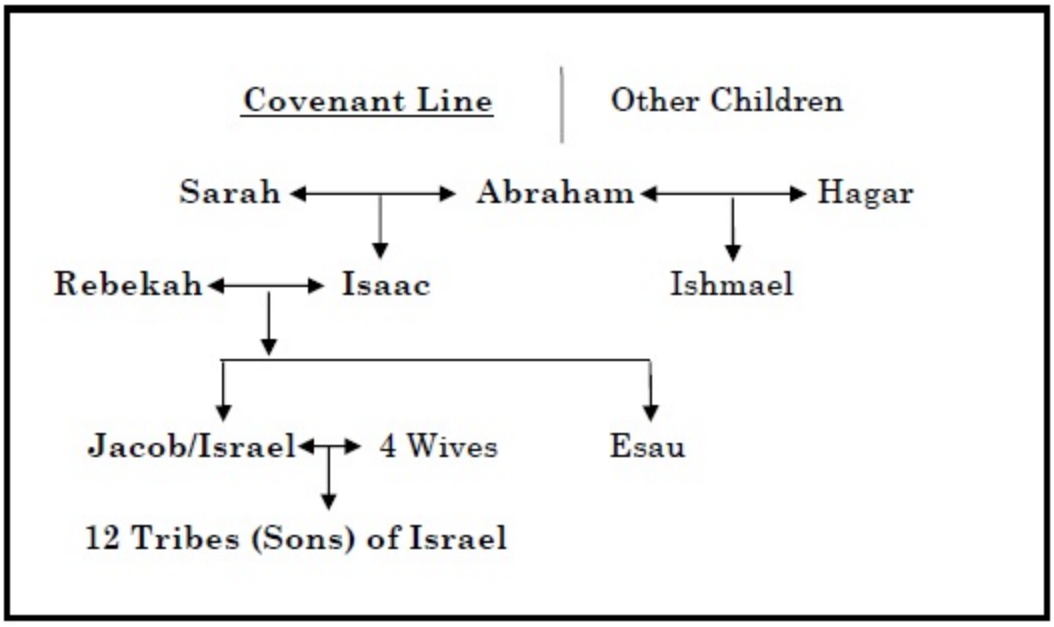
God "remembered" Israel because of the covenant He made with their forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and then He revealed Himself to Moses as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Again, when Moses asked God what he should say to the children of Israel about who sent him, God told him:

> Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, "**The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you."** This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations. – Exodus 3:15

Can you see two significant implications from the above passages? God Himself connected the people of Israel:

1. As the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Exodus 3:6, 15); and
2. In covenant relationship with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Exodus 2:24).

These are the foundational reasons why God took notice of Israel and intended to deliver them from slavery in Egypt in the ongoing fulfillment of the covenant promises He made to their fathers. They were the physical descendants and heirs of the covenant promises. **Israel alone, and no one else, was God's covenant people**.



God's Proposed Covenant with Israel

After God's deliverance of the sons of Israel from Egypt through a series of devastating plagues by the hand of Moses (Exodus chapters 6-14), He made a covenant with Israel. God spoke to Israel through Moses:

> And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, "**Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel:** 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself. Now then, **if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples**, for all the earth is Mine; and **you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'** These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel."– Exodus 19:3-6

God proposed a **conditional** covenant relationship with Israel: "…**if** you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, **then** you shall be My own possession…" (Exodus 19:5).

There was also another important feature of this proposed conditional covenant if they obeyed God. It was an **exclusive** covenant in which they would be God's exclusive people "among all the peoples" (KJV also renders it: "above all peoples"), "a kingdom of priests," and "a holy nation" (also see Deuteronomy 7:6). The Hebrew word translated "holy" is *qadesh* (*Strong's Hebrew Dictionary* #6918) which means "sacred." It carries the idea of that which is consecrated and thus "distinct from the common or profane."[1] Israel was to be set apart or consecrated as His people from all other people. They were God's special "possession." They were to be His covenant people.

God's Terms of the Covenant with Israel

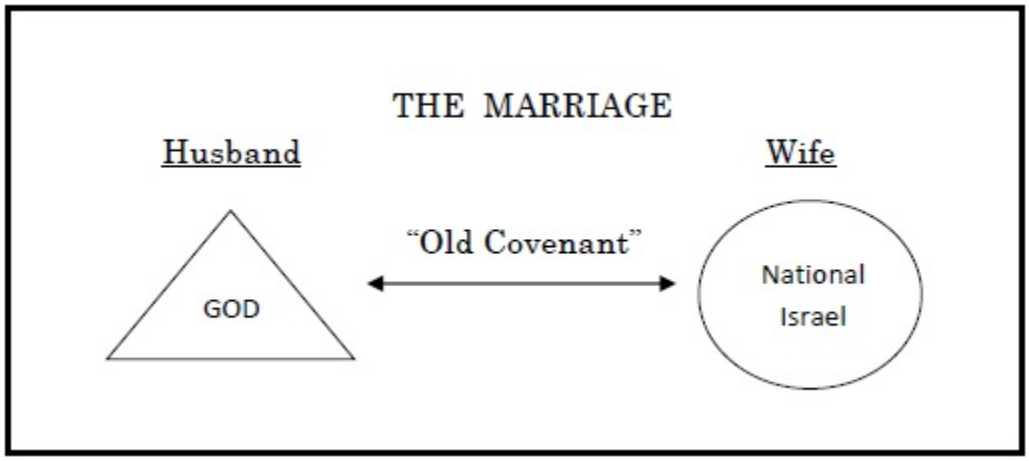
God's proposed conditional covenant was received by the people and they agreed to obey the Lord, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do" (Exodus 19:8). But what had God commanded them to obey? God revealed to the children of Israel through Moses the terms of the covenant, the foundation of it known as the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17) with applications in other

ordinances[2] (Exodus 20:22-23:19). If Israel obeyed the commandments and laws of God, He would take them as His own and bless them in every way.

In Exodus 24:1-8, this covenant was ratified and sealed between God and Israel. The terms of the covenant were repeated to the children of Israel and they confirmed their commitment to obey the Lord and His laws given to them: "All the words which the Lord has spoken we will do!" (v. 3). The covenant was ratified by the blood of animals through Moses who acted as the mediator or officiating minister between God and Israel:

> And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and the other half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. Then he took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!" So Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, "**Behold the blood of the covenant,** which the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words."– Exodus 24:6-8

As you will understand more fully later in this book, and especially in Book Three, **this ceremony was a covenant of marriage between the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their physical descendants – the people of Israel. God was the Husband and Israel was His wife.**



Why God Chose Israel

Why did God choose Israel as His own possession exclusively apart from all others? Why did He take notice of their cruel bondage in Egypt and deliver them from Egypt's power? Why did He make a covenant with Israel? The first reason was that God "loved" Abraham, Isaac and Jacob:

> **Because He loved your fathers,** therefore He chose their descendants after them. And He personally brought you from Egypt by His great power. – Deuteronomy 4:37

God "chose" Israel because He **loved** their fathers – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. At this point in our study of the Scripture, there were **no other people on the planet that God set His loving affection upon except Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And therefore, there are no other people than Israel, their physical descendants, which God had chosen to be His own special people.** Let Deuteronomy 10:15 drive home the implication of God's exclusive love for Israel's "fathers":

> **Yet on your fathers did the Lord set His affection to love them**, and He chose their descendants after them, even you **above all peoples**, as it is this day.

God chose Israel because He loved their fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God chose them "above all peoples."

The second reason God chose Israel and loved them only was because God gave His "oath" to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to confirm the covenant promises to their descendants. To the people of Israel God said:

> For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; **the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession** out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the people, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but **because the Lord loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers,** the Lord brought you out by a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. – Deuteronomy 7:6-8

God loved and chose Israel, the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, because of His faithful intention to keep "the oath which He swore" to their fathers. This was "the oath" that confirmed the seven unconditional covenant promises you discovered in chapters one and two – that their physical descendants would become a multitude of people, many nations and a great nation, for example.

Conclusion

You may have concluded already that without the foundation of the covenant promises and God's oath given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, there would be no deliverance of Israel from Egypt, no choosing of this people and no exclusive covenant with Israel.

The covenant promises were assured to be fulfilled unconditionally by God's love for, and oath to, Israel's patriarchs[3] which were the reasons God made a conditional covenant with

their physical descendants. **The unconditional guarantee was given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and was conditionally fulfilled to their physical descendants.** If Israel obeyed the commandments and laws of God, the covenant promises would be fulfilled for the sake of their fathers.

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were called and chosen to receive the covenant promises. They and they alone. God loved them and no other.

God made an oath to them and no other. Likewise, the children of Israel were called and chosen to be in a covenant relationship because He loved their fathers and made a covenant by oath with them. Israel and no other.

Now that we have, to this point, established the exclusive covenant relationship between God and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their physical descendants, we are ready to discover one of the most important aspects of the history of Israel. This history will open your understanding, in later chapters, as to why God, the Father, sent His Son Jesus Christ to ratify a New Covenant.

What Did You Learn? Test Yourself.

1. What name did the sons of Jacob and their families inherit because God changed Jacob's name (see here)? _____

2. Who did God identify Himself with to Moses and Israel (see here)?

   The God of _____, _____ and _____

3. What were two significant reasons why God intended to deliver Israel from Egyptian bondage (see here)?

   They were the _____ descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

   They were the heirs of the _____ promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

4. What does "holy" mean in respect to Israel as "a holy nation" (Exodus 19:3-6) (see here)?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

5. What are two reasons God exclusively chose Israel to be His people (see here)?

   Because God _____ Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and

   He made an _____ to perform His covenant with them.

Question to Think About

The Bible says that God is the same, yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8). If God loved Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and chose their physical descendants because He loved their fathers, do you think that God still loves Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and therefore still chooses Israel to be His own special people apart from all others?

If God does not lie and is, by His nature, perfect in His faithfulness, is it possible for Him to ever forsake and not fulfill His oath to perform the covenant promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? Why or why not?

4

United and Divided Israel

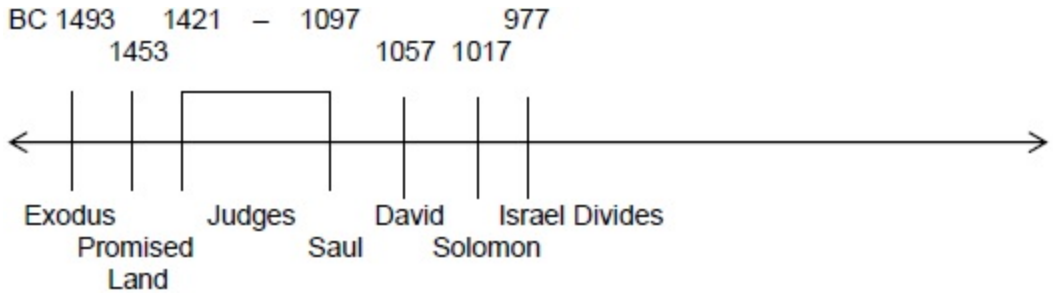
We have now established the covenant foundation from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to their physical descendants known as Israel. The unconditional covenant promises were given upon oath by God Himself to Abraham, his son Isaac and grandson Jacob and their physical descendants comprising the twelve tribes of Israel. These covenant promises would be conditionally fulfilled to national Israel as long as they obeyed the laws of God that He made with them by covenant through Moses.

Although it is important to understand the covenants that God made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their physical descendants, the rest of the covenant story of the Bible cannot be correctly understood unless we know the history of Israel. **The history of Israel from Moses to Jesus Christ is ABSOLUTELY CRITICAL in order to understand what the New Covenant (or New Testament) portion of the Bible says and what it means by what it says.** That history is the focus of this chapter.

We believe if you really discover what happened in Israel's history, you will have the rest of Scripture opened before your eyes like you have never seen it before. The knowledge you are

about to gain will be important as we uncover the rest of the Bible as revealed in later chapters.

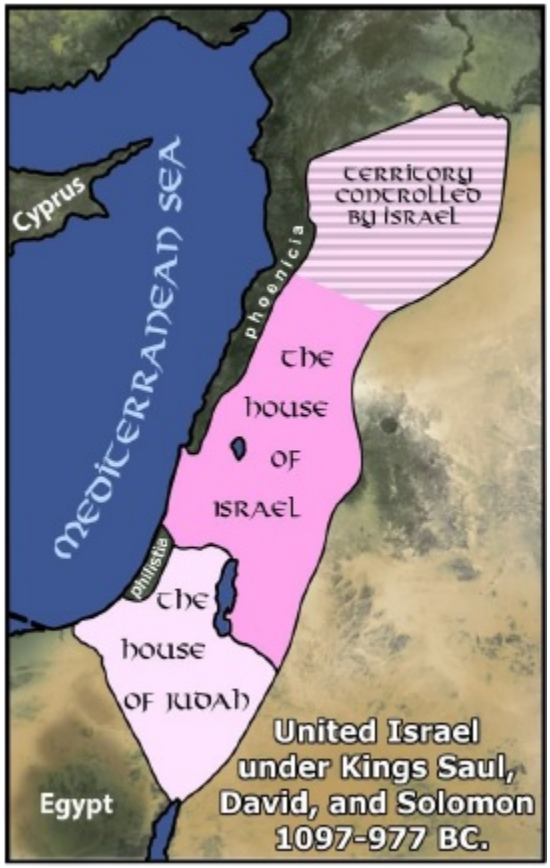
A Brief History of the United Nation of Israel



From the time of Moses until the death of Solomon, David's son and king of Israel, the people of Israel remained a united nation. Although there were many turbulent years during this period of time, Israel was a united nation. Here then is a brief account of this time period that you can verify with the accompanying Bible references.

- Israel entered the promised land called Canaan. Just before Moses' death, God commissioned Joshua to lead Israel to take possession of the land and divide it up as an inheritance among the twelve tribes (Deuteronomy 31:23; Joshua chapters 1-21).
- After Joshua died, Israel was ruled by judges for 324 years. Samuel was the last judge of Israel (Judges 2:6 – I Samuel 7).
- Israel rejected God as their King and demanded a king to rule over them like the other nations (I Samuel 8:4-9; 10:17-19).

- Saul was chosen as Israel's first king (I Samuel 10:20-24) and he ruled over Israel for 40 years (Acts 13:21).
- God rejected Saul as king over Israel (I Samuel 13:8-14; I Chronicles 10:13-14) and chose David to be the next king of Israel (I Samuel 16:1-13).
- King David ruled all the twelve tribes for 40 years –7 years over Judah and 33 years over all Israel[1] (house of Judah and house of Israel – II Samuel 5:4-5; I Kings 2:10-11).
- David's son, Solomon, succeeded David as king over all Israel and Judah (I Kings 1:29-35).
- Solomon built the temple (I Kings 6) and ruled all Israel and Judah for 40 years (I Kings 11:42).
- Solomon died and his son Rehoboam reigned as king in his place (I Kings 11:43).



This brings us to the end of the history of the united nation of Israel from Joshua to Solomon. It was during the time that Solomon's son, Rehoboam, reigned as king in his father's place that something happened in Israel of great importance. **The united nation became a divided nation.**

The Divided Nation of Israel

The story of how the united nation of Israel became divided begins when the ten tribes of the northern house of Israel came to make Solomon's son, Rehoboam, their king as Solomon had been.

> Then Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had come to Shechem to make him king. – I Kings 12:1

There was another man called Jeroboam who had been in self-exile in Egypt during Solomon's reign and came back to lead the house of Israel to make Rehoboam king.

> Now it came about when Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard of it [that Solomon died], that he was living in Egypt (for he was yet in Egypt, where he had fled from the presence of King Solomon). Then they sent and called him, and Jeroboam and all the assembly of Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam. – I Kings 12:2-3

Jeroboam and Israel made this appeal to Rehoboam:

> Your father [Solomon] made our yoke hard; now therefore lighten the hard service of your father and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you. – I Kings 12:4

Rehoboam told Jeroboam and the people of Israel to come back in three days while he considered their request. He then sought out counsel regarding this appeal from the elders who had served Solomon, and also from younger men of his own generation:

> "Depart for three days, then return to me." So the people departed. And King Rehoboam consulted with the elders who had served his father Solomon while he was still alive, saying, "How do you counsel me to answer this people?" Then they spoke to him, saying, "If you will be a servant to this people today, will serve them, grant them their petition, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever." But he forsook the counsel of the elders which they had given him, and consulted with the young men who grew up with him and served him. So he said to them, "What counsel do you give that we may answer this people who have spoken to me saying, 'Lighten the yoke which your father put on us'?" And the young men who grew up with him spoke to him, saying, "Thus you shall say to this people who spoke to you, saying, 'Your father made our yoke heavy, now you make it lighter for us!' But you shall speak to them, 'My little finger is thicker than my father's loins! Whereas my father loaded you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke; my father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions.'" – I Kings 12:5-11

Rehoboam rejected the wisdom of the elders to speak peaceably as a "servant" of the people, but accepted the advice from men of his own generation to rule the people harshly. He thus responded to Israel's appeal:

> Then Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day as the king had directed, saying, "Return to me on the third day." And the king answered the people harshly, for he forsook the advice of the elders which they had given him, and he spoke to them according to the advice of the young men, saying, "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions." So the king did not listen to the people… – I Kings 12:12-15a

As misguided and unwise as we may think Rehoboam's decision was in answering Jeroboam and the house of Israel with scorn, the Scripture concludes:

> …for **it was a turn of events from the Lord**, that He might establish His word, which the Lord spoke through Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat. – I Kings 12:15b

The rejection of the appeal and the following event that transpired was "from the Lord" because it was a fulfillment of a prophecy that Jeroboam would lead the ten tribes of Israel in the north (you can read the story in I Kings 11:28-37).

As a result of Rehoboam's rejection of Israel's appeal, the united nation divided into two houses – the house of David or **house of Judah** in the south and the **house of Israel** in the north.

> When all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, saying "What portion do we have in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse; to your tents, O Israel! Now look after your own house, David!" So Israel departed to their tents. – I Kings 12:16

The house of Israel split from the house of Judah. Rehoboam ruled as king over the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin and other Israelites living at that time in the cities of Judah (I Kings 12:17, 21), and Jeroboam ruled as king over the ten tribes in the north (I Kings 12:20).They were known as **the house of Judah** and **the house of Israel**, respectively (I Kings 12:21).

The point we want you to remember is that Israel was in rebellion against Judah and they became **enemies** for many years:

> So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David [house of Judah] to this day. – I Kings 12:19

That which seemed to be a natural division and rivalry within the united nation now turned into a division of hatred toward each other. Rehoboam even sought to go fight against the house of Israel, but the Lord sent a prophet to him to stop his plan. He listened to the prophet and did not carry it out (I Kings 12:21-24).

From that time on, for many years the house of Israel and house of Judah were divided into two separate kingdoms and were enemies (I Kings 15:16-17). Please see the map on the next page.

Conclusion

The fact that the united kingdom or nation of Israel from Moses to Solomon became divided into two kingdoms (house of Israel and house of Judah) and that they were enemies is critical knowledge in order to understand the rest of the Bible. Why? Recall the covenant promises to **all** the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, especially that they would become "a great nation." A great nation cannot be a divided nation and enemies

against each other. But God, because of His unfailing promise upon His sacred oath to the patriarchs, would fulfill this promise and reunite the divided nation once again. How and when? The answer comes in a future chapter (but don't peek ahead yet because there is a bit more history to discover).

What Did You Learn? Test Yourself.

1. Who was the first king to rule over the united nation of Israel (see here)? _____
2. Who was the second king (see here)? _____

3. After Solomon died, who took his place as king (see here)?

   _____

4. Why did the ten tribes or house of Israel in the north rebel against Rehoboam and the house of Judah (see here)?

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

Question to Think About

If God must fulfill the oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and reunite all Israel to be "a great nation," even though they were divided and enemies, what does that say about the purpose of God?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

5

Rebellion, Captivity and Dispersion of Israel and Judah

Not only were the house of Israel and house of Judah enemies toward each other, but both houses had set themselves on a path of rebellion against the God of their fathers. They forsook Him, sought after other gods, engaged in abominable practices and continually disobeyed every commandment and law of God. In brief, they did not seek or obey the voice of the Lord their God who brought their ancestors out of Egypt and they violated the terms of the covenant they received and agreed to before God.

As a result, both Israel and Judah received the promised curses (Deuteronomy 28:15-68), eventual captivity by foreign nations, and, in the case of the northern house of Israel, divorce and dispersion. This chapter will not only describe what happened, but why this also is, once again, **ABSOLUTELY CRITICAL** knowledge to begin to understand God's plan and purpose of the New Covenant.

Okay, are you ready? Let's begin with a key prophetic word of Moses about what would happen to Israel if they disobeyed the covenant (commandments and laws) they made with God. It's this very prophecy, especially, that will come true and will have

profound significance on the understanding of the New Covenant Scriptures.

Blessings and Curses

As mentioned many times already, the covenant God made with all Israel through Moses was a conditional covenant. If Israel obeyed the terms of the covenant, they would continue to be God's special people above all others and be magnificently blessed in every way. Deuteronomy 28:1-14 outlines the blessings and begins:

> Now it shall be, **if you will diligently obey the Lord your God**, being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. And **all these blessings shall come upon you** and overtake you, **if you will obey the Lord your God**. – Deuteronomy 28:1-2

We encourage you to pause here and read the entire blessing portion in verses 1-14. We would sum up these blessings as God making His people supremely powerful and prosperous – **if** they obeyed the Lord their God. These blessings would be conditional upon obedience.

On the other hand, His conditional covenant also clearly stated that if Israel did not obey the laws of God and turned away from Him, curses would come upon them.

> But it shall come about, **if you will not obey the Lord your God,** to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that **all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you.** – Deuteronomy 28:15

From verses 15 through 68, all the curses are outlined in detail. Again, take a few minutes to read these verses for yourself. How would you describe them?

The Dispersion Curse

Of all the curses listed here, we want to make particular mention of the one in Deuteronomy 28:63-65:

> And it shall come about that as the Lord delighted over you to prosper you, and multiply you, so the Lord will delight over you to make you perish and destroy you; and you shall be torn from the land where you are entering to possess it. Moreover, **the Lord will scatter you among all peoples,** from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth; and there you shall serve other gods, wood and stone, which you or your fathers have not known. And **among those nations** you shall find no rest, and there shall be no resting place for the sole of your foot; but there the Lord will give you a trembling heart, failing of eyes, and despair of soul. – Deuteronomy 28:63-65

In verse 64, God prophesied that if Israel forsook the Lord and disobeyed His laws, He would "scatter" or disperse them "among all people" and "nations" (v. 65). The word "scatter" or disperse is an important word to remember, so let's start with the Hebrew and Greek definition.

Meaning of Words:

What does "scatter" or "disperse" mean? Scatter or disperse is translated from the Hebrew word *puwts*. – *Strong's Hebrew Dictionary* #6327 (as used in Deut. 28:64-65)

Definition: to dash in pieces, lit. or fig. (espec. to disperse): – [variously translated] break (dash, shake) in (to) pieces, cast (abroad), disperse, drive, retire, scatter (abroad), spread abroad.

Definition: *puwts* [or *poots*] "to scatter, disperse, be scattered." Many references are made to Israel as a people and nation "being scattered" among the nations, especially in the imagery of a scattered flock of sheep (Ezek. 34:5-6; Zech. 13:7). Ezekiel also promises the gathering together of this scattered flock: "…I will even gather you from the people….where ye have been scattered…" (Ezek. 11:17; 20:34,41). – W.E. Vine, *Vine's*

Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1996, p. 217

This word is translated in the Septuagint (*LXX*) as *diaspeiro* (verb) *Strong's Greek Dictionary* #1289.

Definition: from #1223 (*dia*) and #4687 (*speiro*); to *sow throughout*, i.e. (figurative) *distribute* in foreign lands :- scatter abroad. – *Strong's Greek Dictionary*

The noun form of *diaspeiro* is *diaspora*. – *Strong's Greek Dictionary* #1290

Definition: from #1289 (*diaspeiro*); *dispersion*, the **(converted) Israelite resident in Gentile countries**: – (which are) scattered (abroad). – *Strong's Greek Dictionary* (our emphasis)

Both the Hebrew and Greek words above refer to Israel as being taken out of their homeland and dispersed or scattered among other peoples and nations. Consider the following verses where this curse was repeated as a warning to Israel:

> You, however, **I will scatter among the nations** and will draw out a sword after you, as your land becomes desolate and your cities become waste. – Leviticus 26:33
>
> The Lord **will scatter you among the peoples,** and you will be left few in number **among the nations**, where the Lord drives you. – Deuteronomy 4:27
>
> I will **scatter them among the nations,** whom neither they nor their fathers have known; and I will send the sword after them until I have annihilated them. – Jeremiah 9:16
>
> So they will know that I am the Lord when I **scatter them among the nations,** and spread them among the countries. – Ezekiel 12:15

We have seen this word "nation" before, back in chapters one and two. Please recall it's the Hebrew word *goyim* (plural for

"nations") and could also be translated "Gentiles" depending on the translator's choice. Israel would be scattered "among the nations." In this case, these were non-Israelite nations.[1]

You will see the significance of this prophetic curse in the New Covenant Scriptures, but for now, just keep it in the back of your mind. Until then, let's see how this curse came to pass in Israel's history.

History of the House of Israel

Just after the united kingdom of Israel divided into warring factions between the house of Israel and the house of Judah, Jeroboam became king of the northern house of Israel around 977 B.C. He introduced the house of Israel to other gods and created a priesthood who were not ordained by God to be priests:

> So the king consulted, and **made two golden calves**, and he said to them, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; **behold your gods, O Israel**, that brought you up from the land of Egypt." And he set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. Now this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one as far as Dan. And he made houses on high places, and **made priests from among all the people who were not of the sons of Levi.** – I Kings 12:28-31

God sent word through the prophet Ahijah to say to Jeroboam:

> You also have done more evil than all who were before you, and have gone and made for yourself other gods and molten images to provoke Me to anger, and have cast Me behind your back. – I Kings 14:9

From the reign of Jeroboam on, almost all the rest of the kings of the house of Israel conducted their lives and continued to lead the people in the evil ways of Jeroboam. The last king to reign over the house of Israel was Hoshea. It was during his reign that

the king of Assyria invaded the land in 745-718 B.C. and took the people of the house of Israel captive into exile to Assyria.

> In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah, Hoshea the son of Elah became king over Israel in Samaria, and reigned nine years. And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, only not as the kings of Israel who were before him. Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against him, and Hoshea became his servant and paid him tribute…Then the king of Assyria invaded the whole land and went up to Samaria and besieged it three years. **In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria[2] and carried Israel away into exile to Assyria, and settled them in Halah and Habor, on the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.** – II Kings 17:1-3, 5-6

The map below shows where the house of Israel was taken captive by the king of Assyria.

The house of Israel was exiled from their land to Assyria. Once again, the context is clear about why this happened:

> Now this came about, because **the sons of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God,** who had brought them up from the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and **they had feared other gods and walked in the customs of the nations whom the Lord had driven out before the sons of Israel,** and in the customs of the kings of Israel which they had introduced. – II Kings 17:7-8

Specifically,

- They "served idols" (17:12);
- They rejected God's "statutes and His covenant which He made with their fathers" (17:15); and
- They "forsook all the commandments of the Lord their God" (17:16).

So, after being repeatedly warned by the prophets, "…the Lord was very angry with Israel and removed them from His sight; none was left except the tribe of Judah" (II Kings 17:18). Sennacherib, the king of Assyria returned eight years later in 710 B.C. and captured all the fortified cities in the land of Judah. Many of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin were also taken captive to Assyria. However, Jerusalem was not captured and was saved by God (II Kings 18).

The Lord cast the entire house of Israel out of their land as well as most of the house of Judah and they were exiled in fulfillment of the promised curse for their disobedience. Let's return again to that prophetic curse:

> And it shall come about that as the Lord delighted over you to prosper you, and multiply you, so the Lord will delight over you to make you perish and destroy you; and **you shall be torn from**

> **the land** where you are entering to possess it. Moreover, **the Lord will scatter you among all peoples**, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth; and there you shall serve other gods, wood and stone, which you or your fathers have not known. And **among those nations** you shall find no rest, and there shall be no resting place for the sole of your foot; but there the Lord will give you a trembling heart, failing of eyes, and despair of soul. – Deuteronomy 28:63-65

This is exactly what happened to the house of Israel, as well as many from Judah, after they were taken captive and expelled from their homeland by Assyria. Why? They forsook the Lord God of their fathers, violated the laws of God and did deeds of wickedness. And they refused the warnings and continued to rebel. **The important point here was that they were "scattered" or dispersed "among the nations."** Remember this because we will see it again.

The second important point to remember is that when God, using Assyria, cast the house of Israel out of their land and scattered them, God divorced them. Do you recall at the covenant ceremony with Moses presiding, that God and all Israel were married? God became her husband and Israel became His wife. The prophet Jeremiah gives us insight into the significance of what God had now done to the house of Israel.

> Then the Lord said to me in the days of Josiah the king, "Have you seen what faithless Israel did? She went up on every high hill and under every green tree, and she was a harlot there. And I thought, 'After she has done all these things, she will return to Me'; but she did not return, and her treacherous sister Judah saw it. And **I saw that for all the adulteries of faithless Israel, I had sent her away and given her a writ of divorce,** yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear; but she went and was a harlot also." – Jeremiah 3:6-8

The prophet Hosea put it in these words:

> … I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away. – Hosea 1:6 (KJV)

The Greek Septuagint states Hosea 1:6 as follows:

> For I will no more have mercy on the house of Israel, but will surely set myself in array against them. – Hosea 1:6

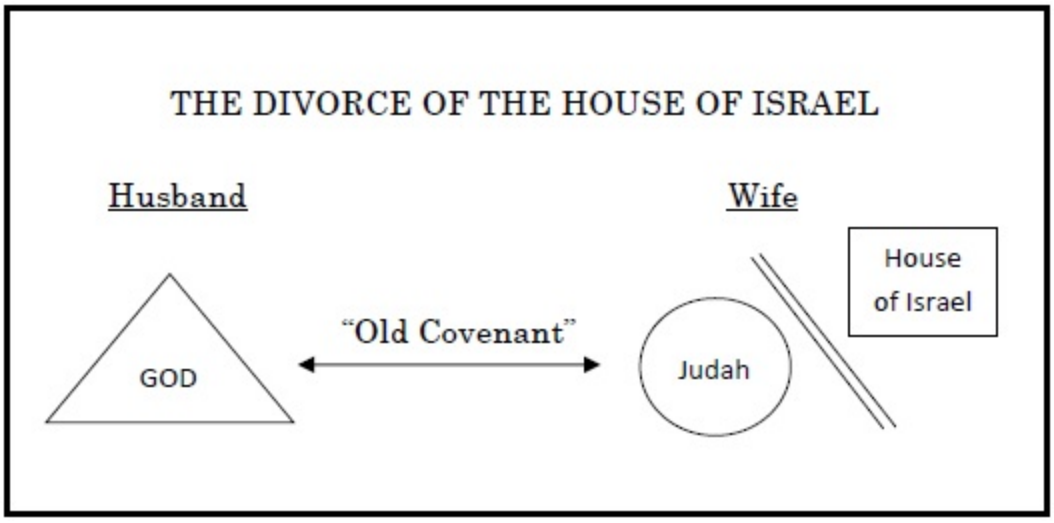
God further states in Hosea:

> Contend with your mother, contend, for **she is not my wife**, and I am not her husband… – Hosea 2:2

God divorced the house of Israel. What does this divorce mean? The house of Israel was no longer God's people, no longer His treasured possession, no longer a part of the covenant relationship. As such they became, in God's sight, like the other nations themselves. **Recall that "nations" can also be translated "Gentiles." The house of Israel became like the "Gentiles."**

To be a "Gentile" or "nation" outside of the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob meant you were considered outside the covenant relationship with God. The northern house of Israel was excluded from the special marriage relationship between God and His covenant people. **That's what the northern house of Israel had become – they were not His covenant people anymore. They were severed or cut off from God's marriage covenant and divorced without hope of reconciliation.**

The remainder of the house of Judah was still in covenant relationship with God, but not the house of Israel.



History of the House of Judah

Although the house of Judah (mainly consisting of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and some from the tribe of Levi) also became rebellious toward the God of their fathers, they were not completely cast off and severed from the covenant relationship like the house of Israel. Here is their story.

All the kings of the house of Judah were the physical descendants of David from King Rehoboam (977 BC) to Zedekiah (585 BC). There were some good kings who did right in the sight of the Lord and some who did evil. But for the most part, the house of Judah continued to transgress God's laws and sought after other gods.

As a result, God also expelled them out of the land and into captivity. As God used Shalmaneser, king of the Assyrians, to take the house of Israel captive and into exile, as well as many Judeans, so God used King Nebuchadnezzar of the Babylonian Empire to take the remainder of the house of Judah captive and exile them to Babylon 133 years later.

The Babylonian exile took place in three phases. The first phase occurred in 604 B.C. in the third year of Jehoiakim, king of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem and took "some of the sons of Israel to Babylon, including some of the royal family and of the nobles, youths in whom was no defect…" (Daniel 1:3-4). The second phase occurred nine years later, in 595 BC, when Jehoiachin was king of Judah. He only reigned three months when Nebuchadnezzar again besieged Jerusalem and led the king and 10,000 people captive to Babylon (II Kings 24:8-16). The third phase occurred in 585 B.C. when Nebuchadnezzar captured and burned Jerusalem and the temple due to Zedekiah's rebellion, and the rest of the Judeans were taken captive to Babylon (please see the map on the next page). Only a small remnant of the very poor were left in the land. You can read all about it in II Kings 25:1-11.

Here is a significant fact to remember about the captivity and exile of the house of Judah to Babylon. **Unlike the northern house of Israel, the house of Judah was exiled for only 70 years. They were never divorced by God.** The prophet Jeremiah spoke to "all the people of Judah and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem" (Jeremiah 25:2) that they would "serve the king of Babylon seventy years" (Jeremiah 25:11).

After the "seventy years" were "completed" (Jeremiah 25:12), God promised that He would destroy Babylon and **a remnant of the house of Judah would return to their land.** And so it came about that the word of God through Jeremiah was fulfilled (II Chronicles 36:20-21) and the people of the house of Judah were allowed to return to their land. This was done by the command of God to Cyrus, the king of Persia, who God used to destroy Babylon:

> Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia – **in order to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah** – the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout this kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, 'The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. **Whoever there is among you of all His people, may the Lord his God be with him, and let him go up!**'" – II Chronicles 36:22-23

You can read about the house of Judah's return from captivity in Ezra and Nehemiah.

So, while a remnant of the house of Judah returned to the land (only 42,360 people returned according to Ezra 2:64), the house of Israel was completely cut off by God and never returned. **Judah had not been divorced or cut off from the covenant relationship with God, but the house of Israel was.** This

distinction is ABSOLUTELY CRITICAL to understand the rest of the New Covenant Scriptures. You will see it all come together in the remaining chapters in this book.

Conclusion

Okay, let's recap two major facts to remember from this chapter. **First, the northern house of Israel was taken captive and exiled to Assyria along with many from the fortified cities of Judah as the fulfillment of the curse in Deuteronomy 28:64-65 to "scatter" (or disperse) them "among all nations."** The entire house of Israel was divorced of God and therefore completely cut off from the marriage covenant relationship with Him.

Second, the remainder of the southern kingdom of the house of Judah was also taken captive and exiled to Babylon, but only for seventy years. After that time of punishment, they returned to their land to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. They were not divorced of God and were not severed from the marriage covenant relationship with Him.

According to the prophet Daniel, both the house of Israel and the house of Judah were scattered or dispersed because of the curse in Deuteronomy 28 due to their disobedience:

> Righteousness belongs to Thee, O Lord, but to us open shame, as it is this day – **to the men of Judah** [those captured by Assyria in 710 AD], **the inhabitants of Jerusalem** [those captured by the Babylonians in 604-585 BC], **and all Israel** [the fall of Samaria in 718 BC when the entire house of Israel was captured by Assyria], those who are nearby and those who are far away in all the countries to which Thou hast driven them, because of their unfaithful deeds which they have committed against Thee. Open shame belongs to us, O Lord, to our kings, our princes, and our

> fathers, because we have sinned against Thee. To the Lord our God belong compassion and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against Him; nor have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in His teachings which He set before us through his servants the prophets. **Indeed all Israel has transgressed Thy law and turned aside, not obeying Thy voice; so the curse has been poured out on us,** along with the oath which is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, for we have sinned against Him. – Daniel 9:7-11

Does the sad and hopeless story end here? Will the covenant love story that began between God and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their physical descendants end in such utter despair? The next chapters will reveal the answer.

What Did You Learn? Test Yourself.

1. One of the curses God promised would come upon the people of Israel in Deuteronomy 28:64-65 if they continued to disobey Him was that He would _____ them "among the nations" (see here and here).

2. Because of the house of Israel's disobedience to their God, who did He use to take them captive (see here and here)?

   _____

3. God, through the prophet Jeremiah, gave the house of Israel a certificate of _____ (see here).

4. How many years was the house of Judah in captivity in Babylon (see here)?

   _____

Question to Think About

If God gave unconditional covenant promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (that we discovered back in chapters one and two), how do you think that will affect the final outcome of the divorced house of Israel? Give the reasons for your answer.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

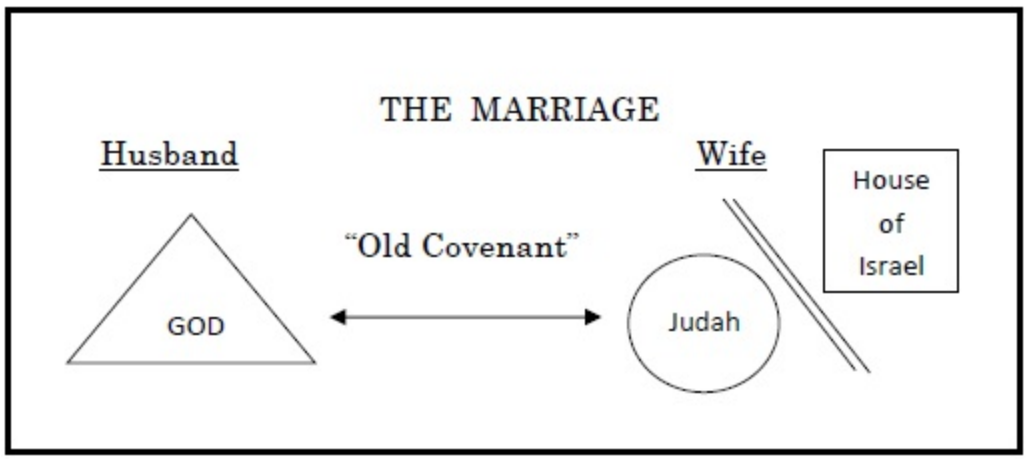
6

The New Covenant

To understand what the Bible says and what it means in regard to the New Covenant in Jesus Christ, the historical background you learned about in the previous chapters is, once again, ABSOLUTELY CRITICAL. So, let's do a quick review of the important truths and facts that we have covered that are foundational to what you are about to discover in the rest of the chapters in this book.

- God made unconditional covenant promises on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their physical descendants. The important implication to remember is that God would fulfill these promises. This is certain! (Review these promises if you need to on page 13.)
- God and Israel agreed to a conditional marriage covenant through Moses. This conditional covenant was based upon the obedience of the people of Israel to the laws of God.
- Israel remained a united nation until the death of King Solomon.
- After Solomon's death, the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, called Israel, became a divided nation (the house of Israel and the house of Judah) and became mutual enemies of each other.

- Both houses rebelled against the God of their fathers and broke the covenant God made with them through Moses. The important implication was that they continually sinned against God and each other by violating or transgressing God's laws and, thus, became subject to God's promised curses.
- One of those curses was that God's people would be scattered or dispersed "among the nations." The house of Israel went into captivity and exile in Assyria and "among the nations." The important implication is that they were divorced by God and reckoned by Him as not His people any longer nor in covenant relationship with Him. They were cast off as God's covenant people.
- Several years later, all of the fortified cities of Judah were also taken captive to Assyria. Only Jerusalem remained to represent the house of Judah.
- 133 years later, the remaining house of Judah went into captivity and exile to Babylon, but a small portion of them returned to their own land after 70 years. God never divorced the house of Judah. Now only the house of Judah represented the nation of Israel until the New Covenant.



So, here we have a hopeless situation for the vast majority of Israelites who were of the northern house of Israel. They have been cut off from God. Would God forsake His people forever? No. How could He? God made unconditional and certain covenant promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their physical descendants. How could God go back on His own oath to them? But how would this situation regarding the divorced house of Israel be remedied?

The answer is revealed in God's faithfulness and plan **to form a New Covenant that would completely replace the Old Covenant**. That is what you are about to discover.

Promised Restoration

We begin with the prophecy of God's plan of a future restoration of the house of Israel and the house of Judah in the words of the prophet Jeremiah:

> **"Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,** not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the Lord. – Jeremiah 31:31-32

There are five important facts about this promised restoration in these verses:

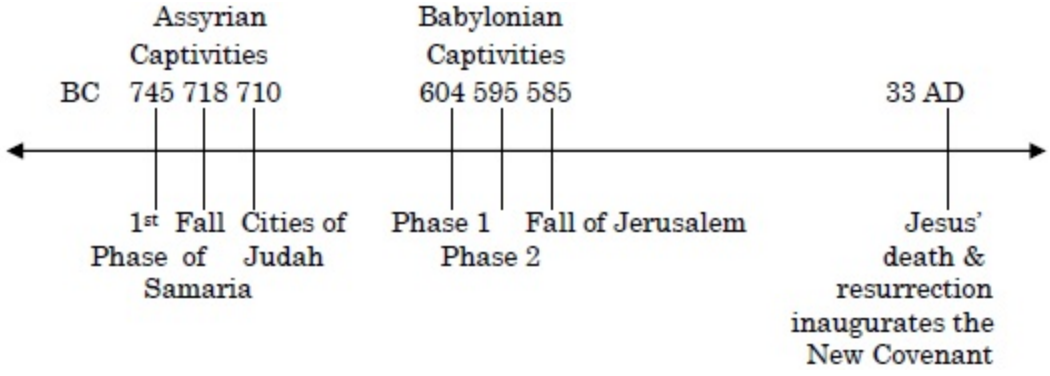
1. It was a New Covenant that God was going to make with the house of Israel and the house of Judah – all twelve tribes.
2. The New Covenant would be made with the same physical descendants of the "fathers" who God brought "out of the land of Egypt." These physical descendants would be comprised of the house of Israel and the house of Judah.
3. This New Covenant would be in contrast to the "covenant" which God had "made with their fathers." That "covenant" was the Old Covenant through Moses that God made with the ancestors of the house of Israel and house of Judah who "broke" that covenant.
4. The Old Covenant through Moses was a marriage covenant because God said He "was a husband" to all Israel.
5. In the New Covenant, God would forgive their "iniquity" and "sin." "Sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4, KJV).

The New Covenant was a promised restoration and reconciliation between God and the house of Israel and the house of Judah. What the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob could not do to justify themselves before God nor be reconciled back to their God as His people because of their sins and rebellion (transgression of God's laws), the New Covenant would remedy. What a great hope the twelve tribes must have had from the prophecy of Jeremiah that one day in the future, God would make a New Covenant with them.

In addition to the promised benefits of the New Covenant, God would not only take away their "sin" but put His "law within them" and write it "on their heart" (Jeremiah 31:33). In place of the written law of God through Moses on tablets of stone, God would write His law on their heart. What a magnificent promise that God would not and could not forever "cast off all the offspring of Israel for all they have done…" (Jeremiah 31:37).

Fulfillment of the New Covenant

Over 700 years after the northern house of Israel was divorced of God and exiled and dispersed "among the nations," and over 600 years after the southern house of Judah had been taken captive and exiled to Babylon, the time of fulfillment of God's promised New Covenant would be inaugurated through Jesus Christ.



Let's begin the New Covenant story with important foundational background as to who Jesus was, what He came to do, and why. Before He was born, Gabriel revealed to the virgin Mary the following concerning her conception by the Holy Spirit and the birth of a son.

> Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee, called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the

> virgin's name was Mary. And coming in, he said to her, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And **behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus**." – Luke 1:26-31

Gabriel proceeded to explain to Mary the significance of who Jesus would be and what He would do.

> He will be great, and will be called **the Son of the Most High;** and the Lord God will give Him **the throne of His father David**; and **He will reign over the house of Jacob forever;** and **His kingdom will have no end**. – Luke 1:32-33

Jesus would be "the Son of the Most High" God and would "reign over the house of Jacob forever" as their King and there would be no "end" to "His kingdom" (vs. 32-33). The "house of Jacob" meant all of Israel, since Jacob's name was changed to "Israel" and he was the father of the twelve tribes. Jesus would reign as King over all Israel, which would be comprised of the twelve tribes of the house of Israel and the house of Judah.

Later on, as Mary was now pregnant with the Jesus, she spoke by the Holy Spirit as to why this miraculous moving of God was happening in respect to the coming of Jesus:

> **He has given help to Israel** His servant, in remembrance of His mercy, **as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his offspring forever. –** Luke 1:54-55

Who was God now giving help to? Israel. For what reason? "In remembrance of His mercy as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his offspring forever." Just as God helped and saved Israel from Egyptian bondage because He "remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" (Exodus 2:24), so once again, He now remembers His unconditional covenant

promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their descendants in the context of the coming birth of Jesus and His purpose toward "Israel."

The prophecy of Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, said the same thing about Jesus – that God was now showing

> ... mercy toward our fathers, and **to remember His holy covenant, the oath which He swore to Abraham our father**... – Luke 1:72-73

God was sending His Son to Israel because of the covenant and oath given to Abraham. The prophecy of the purpose and mission of Jesus Christ was based on the foundation of God's unconditional covenant relationship with Abraham, affirmed by oath.

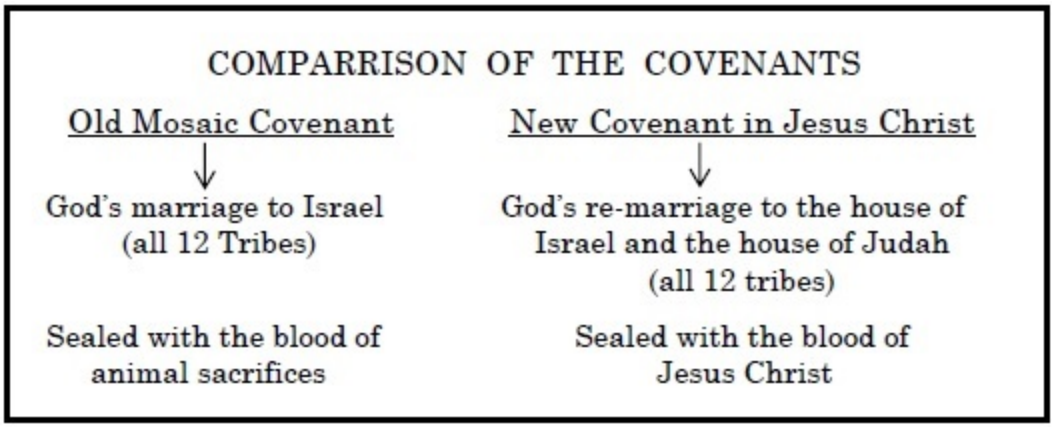
The New Covenant and the Blood of Jesus

Keeping this foundation in mind, we now advance from the birth of Jesus to the time just before Jesus would be crucified. The scene is in the upper room where Jesus and His disciples were celebrating the Passover.[1] This particular Passover would have special significance to the disciples and to many Christian churches in centuries to follow. It is also commonly known as "The Lord's Supper" or "Communion."

Just as Moses ratified and sealed the Old Covenant by taking the blood of animals and sprinkling "it on the people" saying "Behold, the blood of the covenant" (Exodus 24:8), Jesus likewise said "the new covenant in My blood" as He spoke of ratifying the New Covenant by His shed blood:

> And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, 'This cup which is poured out for you is **the new covenant in My blood**." – Luke 22:20

With whom did God make the first or Old Covenant through Moses? Israel – the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And with whom was God making the New Covenant through Jesus Christ? The house of Israel and the house of Judah – the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Hebrews 8:8-12). **Both covenants were with the same people!**


COMPARRISON OF THE COVENANTS
Old Mosaic Covenant
New Covenant in Jesus Christ
God's marriage to Israel (all 12 Tribes)
God's re-marriage to the house of Israel and the house of Judah (all 12 tribes)
Sealed with the blood of animal sacrifices
Sealed with the blood of Jesus Christ

The New Covenant Explained

The reason that the New Covenant was for the same people as the Old Covenant, was because the Old Covenant failed. And it failed because the people of Israel (the house of Israel and house of Judah) violated the terms of that covenant. They sinned against God and each other continually. They transgressed God's laws. This is exactly what Hebrews 9:15 says. But let's begin several verses before verse 15 so we understand the contrasting context between the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ and that of animals in Old Covenant law:

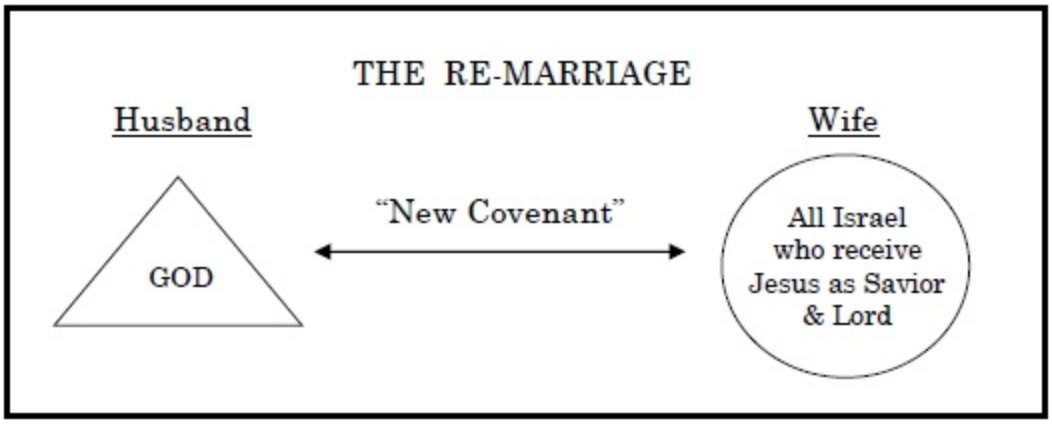
> But when **Christ appeared as a high priest** of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; and **not through the blood of goats and calves, but**

> **through His own blood**, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? – Hebrews 9:11-14

The blood Jesus Christ shed on the cross was far more effective than "the blood of goats and calves" for the cleansing of the "conscience." And why did the conscience have to be cleansed? Israel was guilty because they transgressed the laws of God. Now, look at Hebrews 9:15:

> And for this reason **He [Jesus] is the mediator of a new covenant**, in order that since a death has taken place **for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant,** those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. – Hebrews 9:15

Jesus, as "the mediator" between God and Israel shed His own blood to ratify the New Covenant **"for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant…" by the people of Israel.** In the Old Covenant, Moses was the mediator between God and Israel, and sealed the marriage covenant with the blood of animals. Now Jesus is the Mediator of the New Covenant between God and Israel, sealing the marriage covenant with His own blood.



What does "redemption" mean? In the original Greek text, "redemption" is translated from the Greek word *apolutrosis*. It means "to release on payment of ransom; a release effected by payment of ransom" (*Strong's Greek Dictionary* #629). More specifically, it meant "release from a captive condition" along with the idea of "acquittal."[2]

In other words, Jesus was the ransom for the payment to release captive Israel who was scattered "among the nations" for "the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant" (Hebrews 9:15). That release was effected with regard to the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins to release them from their sins:

> …without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. – Hebrews 9:22

Put another way, Jesus "has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Hebrews 9:26) and "to bear the sins of many" (v. 28), pertaining to Israel only, since the context reveals that only they transgressed the laws of God under the "first covenant." As a result, they were set free from the guilt and consequences of their sins before God.

O come, O come, Emmanuel

And ransom captive Israel.

Conclusion

The New Covenant, in and through Jesus Christ, was necessary for two primary reasons:

- To provide a better sacrifice through the shed blood of Jesus so that the sins of the house of Israel and the house of Judah committed under the first or Old Covenant through Moses could be fully forgiven and thus they were released from their captivity to sin so they could return to the God of their fathers, and
- To continue to fulfill the unconditional covenant promises that God made on oath to their fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their descendants, Israel.

The New Covenant was the next part of God's unified, consistent plan and purpose.

- All the covenants thus far – the Abrahamic Covenant, the first or Old Covenant through Moses, and the New Covenant in and through Jesus Christ – are all connected and interdependent on each other.
- All the covenants thus far are consistently and exclusively with only one people – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their physical descendants, Israel.

Such conclusions are undeniable and thoroughly evidenced from what the Bible says. But, what about everybody else? What about the "Gentiles"? Does the Bible open up the covenant to include anyone else outside of physical Israel? Isn't there a "spiritual Israel," as many say?

These are very important questions that will be answered in the next two chapters. And we think you will discover clear answers that will change the way you read and understand the Bible forever.

What Did You Learn? Test Yourself.

1. With whom did God make a New Covenant (see here)?

   _____

   and

   _____

2. When Jesus was celebrating the Passover with His disciples, what covenant did He refer to in regard to His "blood" (see here)?

   The _____ Covenant

3. In respect to the first or Old Covenant, why did there have to be a New Covenant (see here and here)?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

4. Whose sins did Jesus bear on the cross "by the sacrifice of Himself" (see here)?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

Question to Think About

What did you learn about the New Covenant that you did not know before and why is that significant in respect to your understanding of the Bible to this point?

7

Jews and Gentiles in the Bible

You are about to encounter and discover a MAJOR key that unlocks what the Bible says and what it means by what it says. That key is discovered in the biblical definition and meaning of the terms commonly translated "Jews" and "Gentiles."

It is assumed as fact today that "Jews" means Israel and "Gentiles" means every person who is not Israel or non-Jews. In other words, Jews and Gentiles are inclusive of everybody on the planet. But is this true and does this hold up to careful biblical analysis? Is this assumption consistent with what we have discovered so far – that the biblical covenants are interdependent on each other and are exclusive to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their physical descendants? How can other people now be included as beneficiaries of these covenants? Was there a New Covenant extension of some sort through which God has opened the door to all other "humans" on the planet? These questions will be answered in respect to the definition and meaning of "Jews" and "Gentiles."

We will discover what the Bible says concerning these questions by, once again, applying the two most basic principles of interpretation: 1) the Bible is most accurately interpreted in its context, and 2) the Bible interprets itself. So, let's get started with the term "Jews."

What Does "Jew" Mean?

The Hebrew word most commonly translated "Jew" is *Yehudi* (*Strong's Hebrew Dictionary* #3064) which comes from *Yehudah* (#3063). **The first time it appears in the Old Covenant Scriptures is II Kings 16:6** (translated "Judeans" in the New American Standard Bible (NASB) and "Jews" in the King James Version (KJV).

> At that time Rezin king of Aram recovered Elath for Aram, and cleared **the Judeans** out of Elath entirely; and the Arameans came to Elath, and have lived there to this day. – II Kings 16:6 (NASB)
>
> At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drave **the Jews** from Elath: and the Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day.– II Kings 16:6 (KJV)

The context of II Kings 16:6 was about two kings (Rezin and Pekah) who invaded the southern house of Judah to make war against Ahaz, the king of Judah. The NASB translated the Hebrew term *Yehudi* correctly, that is, "Judeans" because that's who they were. ***Yehudi* meant Judean of the house of Judah. This word never referred to the northern house of Israel anywhere in the Bible. Furthermore, neither *Yehudi* or *Yehudah,* commonly translated "Jew" or "Jews," referred to anyone in the Old Covenant Scriptures other than those pertaining to Judah.** The following authority of biblical Hebrew summarizes the use of the terms.

Meaning of Words:

What does "Jew" mean?

Yehudah – Strong's Hebrew Dictionary #3063

Definition from *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, p. 397 – depending on the context, *Yehudah* variously means:

1. Son of Jacob and Leah (named Judah)
2. Tribe descended from Judah
3. Nation of the southern kingdom under the dynasty of David, as distinguished from the northern kingdom of Ephraim or Israel
4. Land of Judah

The Greek term is equivalent in meaning to the Hebrew:

Ioudaious – Strong's Greek Dictionary #2453.

Definition: from #2455 (*Ioudas*): Judean, belonging to *Jehudah*.

By implication, the term "Jew" or "Jews" in the Old Covenant Scriptures never referred to the northern ten tribes of Israel, but only to Judah, the tribe of Judah, the southern house of Judah, or the land of Judah. Furthermore, **Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were never referred to as "Jews."**

It's important to point out, however, that when God divorced and sent the northern house of Israel away, only a remnant of the house of Judah remained as God's covenant people. Of that remnant, only a very small remnant returned from Babylon to rebuild Jerusalem and they represented what was left of the nation of Israel. For example, the remainder of the house of Judah (inclusive of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and some Levites) that returned to Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity was often referred to as:

- Of Israel (Ezra 2:59; 4:3; Nehemiah 11:20)
- Sons of Israel (Ezra 3:1; 6:16; Nehemiah 1:6; 7:73; 8:14)
- People of Israel (Ezra 7:13; 9:1)
- All Israel (Ezra 10:5)

- Descendants of Israel (Nehemiah 9:2)

The house of Judah represented national Israel from then on. This is important to keep in mind in order to understand the reference that the Apostle Paul makes about "Israel" in Romans 9. But we will mention this again at the right time in the next chapter. It will make more sense later.

What Does "Gentile" Mean?

Now let's turn our attention to the term "Gentile." By way of review, you may recall that "Gentile" can also be translated "nation." Both words refer to the same Hebrew word *goy* (*Strong's Hebrew Dictionary* #1471) (*goyim* – plural). Depending on the context, this word can mean:

1. Physical offspring from each of Noah's sons:

   > These are the **families of the sons of Noah**, according to their genealogies, **by their nations**; and **out of these the nations** were separated on the earth after the flood. – Genesis 10:32

2. Physical offspring from Abraham and Sarah:

   > Now the Lord said to Abram….I will make you a great **nation**… – Genesis 12:2
   >
   > As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of **a multitude of nations**. – Genesis 17:4

The Greek word for "Gentile" or "nation" is *ethnos* (*Strong's Greek Dictionary* #1484). *Ethnos* is equivalent to the Hebrew word *goy*. It's also used in the Greek Old (*LXX*) and New Covenant Scriptures and has a **variety of meanings depending on the context.** For example, in Luke 7:2-5 *ethnos* refers to the Judean people:

> And a certain centurion's slave, who was highly regarded by him, was sick and about to die. And when he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish [#2453 - *Ioudaious*] elders asking Him to come and save the life of his slave. And when they had come to Jesus, they earnestly entreated Him, saying, "He is worthy for You to grant this to him; for he loves **our nation [*ethnos*]**, and it was he who built us our synagogue."

"Jewish elders" meant Judean elders. In the above passage, the Judean elders identified themselves with "our nation" or the Judean nation or even as the nation of Israel which, at that time, was only represented by the house of Judah. Again, **depending on the context** where "Gentiles" or "nations" is used, it can refer to different people including "Jews" or Judeans of the house of Judah.

Gentiles or Nations and the Uncircumcised

There is one more important meaning of "Gentiles" or "nations" to remember for the next chapter. It can be associated with the **uncircumcised.** Let's explain.

Physical circumcision (cutting off of the foreskin of the male penis) was commanded by God for Abraham to do and for his descendants. It was a sign and seal of God's covenant relationship with Abraham. As God confirmed and established His covenant with Abraham that he would be "the father of a multitude of nations" (Genesis 17:4), God commanded that Abraham and his descendants would keep that covenant (v. 9) by the sign of circumcision:

> This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: **every male among you shall be circumcised.** And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; and **it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you.** – Genesis 17:10-11

So important was this act of circumcision for each male that if one was "not circumcised…that person shall be cut off from his people" (Genesis 17:14). In the mind of the Israelite, circumcision was absolutely necessary to be in covenant relationship with God. And circumcision distinguished the covenant people from other nations not of Abraham's family line. The implication was that **the uncircumcised were not considered God's covenant people.**

This practice and concept of circumcision carried over into the New Covenant Scriptures. In the first century, as churches were being founded and established, there was often contention and debate with those Judeans or those of the house of Judah (often translated "Jews") and "Gentile" converts to Jesus Christ. The question was whether a Gentile Christian had to be circumcised in order to be in New Covenant relationship with God through Jesus Christ. To Judeans, to be "uncircumcised" meant you were a "Gentile" and therefore, outside the covenant relationship with God.

This was illustrated in Acts 11 after the Apostle Peter was directed by the Spirit of God to go to the house of a man named Cornelius (Acts 10:22-33) who was considered a "Gentile." Those in "Judea" and who were "circumcised" criticized Peter because he "went to uncircumcised men and ate with them" (Acts 11:3). The "uncircumcised" were considered the same as "the Gentiles" (v. 1). As far as "the apostles and the brethren who were throughout Judea" were concerned, the "uncircumcised" or "the Gentiles" were outside the covenant and considered unclean.

Those of the house of Judah believed the "Gentiles" or "nations" were not God's covenant people even if they were

professing “Christians.” This is important background because, as we explore the meaning of the term “Gentile” in the New Covenant Scriptures in the next chapter, we will be able to correctly identify who they are. Again, this will be made clearer in the next chapter.

Conclusion

One of the most critical mistakes that is believed and taught in many churches today (intentional or not) is the generalization that “Jews” means all twelve tribes of Israel and “Gentiles” means all non-Jews, or in other words, everyone else on the planet. The Bible determines in each instance where these terms are used their meaning and application by the context.

What we learned in this chapter is that:

- The term “Jew,” both in the Hebrew and Greek languages, never refers to anyone other than Judeans, the house of Judah, or Judah;
- The term “Jew” never referred to the northern ten tribes of the house of Israel, or to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and
- The meaning of the word “Gentiles” translated from the Hebrew and Greek words for “nation” is based solely on each individual context.

In the next chapter, we will examine two Bible passages where the terms “Jews” and “Gentiles” are used. We will apply not only the principles of interpretation, but also how they are to be under-stood from what we learned regarding Israel’s historical context. Hang on, because this is where it gets exciting.

What Did You Learn? Test Yourself.

1. What are four possible meanings of the Hebrew word *Yehudah* commonly translated "Jews" (see here)?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. The people of the house of Judah who returned to Jerusalem and Judea from the Babylonian captivity were also known, for example, as of _____ or the sons of _____ or people of _____ or all _____ (see here and here).

3. "Gentile(s)" or nation(s) can refer to the physical offspring of Noah's sons or of Abraham's family or even the _____ people in Luke 7:2-5 (see here and here).

4. Uncircumcised people were considered as "Gentiles" or "nations" who were _____ God's covenant people (see here).

Question to Think About

What did you learn about the varied meanings of "Jew" and "Gentile" and what significance does this have as you continue to read and study the Bible?

_____

_____

_____

_____

8

The Meaning of Gentiles According to the Apostle Paul

What you are about to discover is the correct biblical identification of the so-called "Gentiles" from the context of the testimony of the Apostle Paul. Contrary to orthodox and popular Christian consensus, and even what you may have believed, the term "Gentiles" or "nations" in the New Covenant Scriptures does not represent everyone on the planet who is not a "Jew" (as this term "Jew" is **assumed** to refer to the twelve tribes of Israel).

Applying the two major principles of interpretation discussed previously, as well as what we have discovered from the historical context, we will find out what the Bible says and what it means concerning the identity of the "Gentiles."

Review of a Curse and History

Let's begin our study by reviewing one of the curses that God said would happen to Israel if they rebelled against God and disobeyed His laws:

> Moreover, **the Lord will scatter you among all peoples**, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth; and there you shall serve other gods, wood and stone, which you or your fathers have not known. And **among those nations** you shall find no

> rest, and there shall be no resting place for the sole of your foot; but there the Lord will give you a trembling heart, failing of eyes, and despair of soul. – Deuteronomy 28:64-65
>
> And the Lord will **scatter you among the peoples**, and you shall be left few in number **among the nations**, where the Lord shall drive you. – Deuteronomy 4:27
>
> You, however, **I will scatter among the nations** and will draw out a sword after you, as your land becomes desolate and your cities become waste. – Leviticus 26:33

The curse was that God would scatter or disperse Israel "among the nations" if they disobeyed God and violated the terms of the conditional covenant through Moses.

Now, let's retrace the history of the house of Israel. We learned in chapter five that the northern house of Israel was eventually cast off and divorced by God and sent into captivity by the Assyrians (718 BC, II Kings 18:11). The house of Israel was comprised of the ten northern tribes at that time. In addition, most of the house of Judah was also taken captive by Assyria eight years later and only a small remnant of the southern house of Judah remained in Jerusalem (II Kings18:13). **The house of Israel was scattered or dispersed among other nations. The promised curse was fulfilled.**

The Gentiles According to Paul

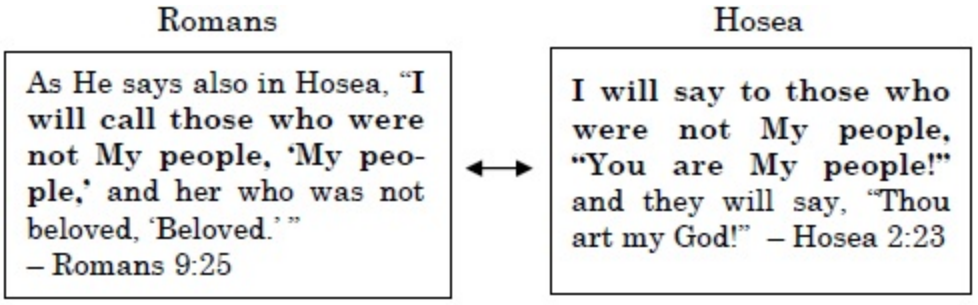
Now, let's fast forward seven centuries from the captivity of the house of Israel in 718 BC to the first century and the first coming of Jesus Christ and the establishment of His churches through the Apostles. The house of Israel had been in captivity and exiled among other nations, migrating to other lands,[1] for over 700 years. The Apostle Paul was called and commissioned to preach the gospel of Jesus "before the Gentiles" (Acts 9:15). Who were

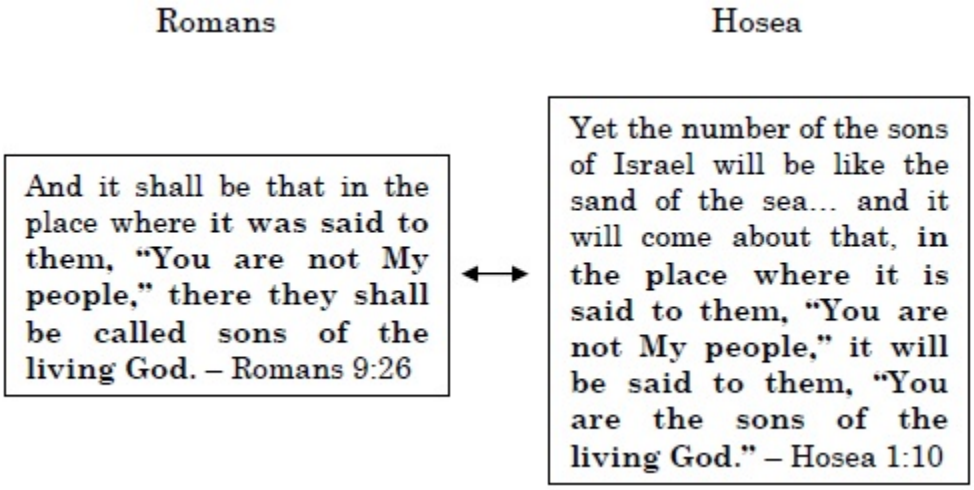
they? Paul's letter to the church in Rome (Romans) identifies "the Gentiles."

Paul's letter to the church in Rome was addressed to two groups: the "Jews" and "Greeks"[2] or "Gentiles" (Romans 1-3). In Romans 9:22-26, Paul discusses God's mercy on the "Jews" as well as "those from among the Gentiles" (v. 24). Then, Paul places his emphasis on those "from among the Gentiles," identifying them by his quote from Hosea, an Old Testament prophet:

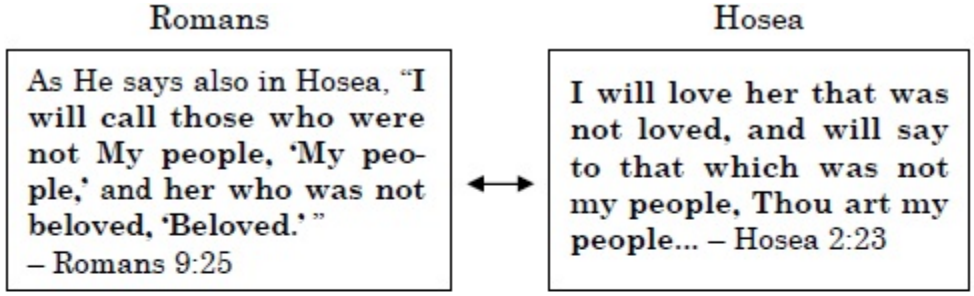
> As He says also in Hosea, "I will call those who were not My people, 'My people,' and her who was not beloved, 'Beloved.' And it shall be that in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' there they shall be called sons of the living God." – Romans 9:25-26

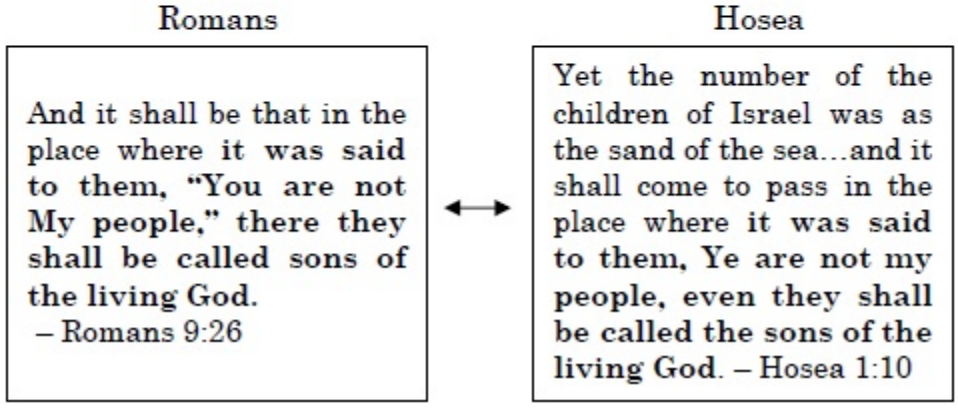
Applying the rules of interpretation – 1) that the meaning of a verse or word is determined by its context, and 2) allowing the Bible to interpret itself – let's see what Hosea says about who the "Gentiles" are. Notice that Paul specifically quotes Hosea 2:23 in Romans 9:25, and Hosea 1:10 in Romans 9:26.


Romans
As He says also in Hosea, "I will call those who were not My people, 'My people,' and her who was not beloved, 'Beloved.' "
– Romans 9:25
Hosea
I will say to those who were not My people, "You are My people!" and they will say, "Thou art my God!" – Hosea 2:23


Romans
Hosea
And it shall be that in the place where it was said to them, "You are not My people," there they shall be called sons of the living God. – Romans 9:26
Yet the number of the sons of Israel will be like the sand of the sea... and it will come about that, in the place where it is said to them, "You are not My people," it will be said to them, "You are the sons of the living God." – Hosea 1:10

The comparative texts above have similar language although not exactly identical, but they are close enough to match them up as one and the same. However, these texts are much closer in language when comparing Romans to the Septuagint text (the Greek Old Testament):


Romans
Hosea
As He says also in Hosea, "I will call those who were not My people, 'My people,' and her who was not beloved, 'Beloved.' " – Romans 9:25
I will love her that was not loved, and will say to that which was not my people, Thou art my people... – Hosea 2:23


Romans
Hosea
And it shall be that in the place where it was said to them, "You are not My people," there they shall be called sons of the living God. – Romans 9:26
Yet the number of the children of Israel was as the sand of the sea...and it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, Ye are not my people, even they shall be called the sons of the living God. – Hosea 1:10

The question is, who were "My people" according to Hosea? To get that answer, we need to read the context beginning in Hosea 1.

First, to whom was Hosea the prophet writing? Let's read Hosea 1:1.

> The word of the Lord which came to Hosea the son of Beeri, during the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, **kings of Judah,** and during the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, **king of Israel**. – Hosea 1:1

Hosea was writing during the time of the house of Judah and the house of Israel before their respective captivities and exile.

Now, let's go on to verses 2-3:

> When the Lord first spoke through Hosea, the Lord said to Hosea, "Go, take to yourself a wife of harlotry, and have children of harlotry; for the land commits flagrant harlotry, forsaking the Lord." So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. – Hosea 1:2-3

The Lord commanded Hosea to take a wife of harlotry,[3] symbolic of "the land" that "commits flagrant harlotry" (v.2). Her name was Gomer, representing the adulterous house of Israel, and she bore Hosea a son. His name was to be Jezreel and that name was symbolic of what the Lord was going to do to the house of Israel:

> And the Lord said to him, "**Name him Jezreel;** for yet a little while, and I will punish the house of Jehu for the bloodshed of Jezreel, and **I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel.** And it will come about on that day, that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel." – Hosea 1:4-5

The Lord said through Hosea that He would put "an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel" as a punishment for the "house of

Jehu for the bloodshed of Jezreel." Briefly, here is the background of this story.

One of the most wicked kings of the house of Israel was Ahab. God prophesied through the prophet Elisha that a man named Jehu would slay all of the family of Ahab and become king over the house of Israel in his place (II Kings 9:1-8). And judgment did come to Ahab and his family when Jehu killed them all (II Kings 10:1-10). But Jehu's vengeance went beyond God's intention and he also killed those not of Ahab's family, "all his great men and his acquaintances and his priests…" (II Kings 10:11). This was just another deed of wickedness added to the rest of the sins of the rebellious and disobedient house of Israel. As a result, God was going to "put an end to…the house of Israel" (Hosea 1:4).

Hosea continues his prophecy about another child that his wife would have:

> Then she conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. And the Lord said to him, "**Name her Lo-ruhamah, for I will no longer have compassion on the house of Israel, that I should ever forgive them."** – Hosea 1:6

We believe that this verse is more accurately translated by the King James Version:

> And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. And God said unto him, **Call her name Loruhamah: for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away.** – Hosea 1:6 (KJV)

Hosea's wife bore him a daughter named Lo-ruhamah to signify that the Lord would "no longer have compassion on the house of Israel" and that He would not "forgive them," that is, that He would "take them away" or send them away into

captivity. This was a second symbolic witness of God's rejection of the house of Israel.

In contrast, the Lord would treat the house of Judah differently:

> **But I will have compassion on the house of Judah** and deliver them by the Lord their God, and will not deliver them by bow, sword, battle, horses, or horsemen. – Hosea 1:7

The house of Judah would also be taken captive and exiled to Babylon, but not completely forsaken. A remnant of them would return to the land of Judea. But the house of Israel would not return to her land.

Once again, Hosea had another son named Lo-ammi. The meaning of the name conveyed another message about the house of Israel – "for you are not My people and I am not your God."

> And the Lord said, "**Name him Lo-ammi, for you are not My people, and I am not your God."** – Hosea 1:9

God was rejecting the house of Israel as "not My people." But that's not the end of the story. Read the next verse:

> **Yet the number of the sons of Israel will be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And it will come about that in the place where it is said to them, "You are not My people," it will be said to them, "You are the sons of the living God."** – Hosea 1:10

The "sons of Israel" (the house of Israel) would be numerous in number, yet not be God's people. **However, the prophecy through Hosea was that they would be called "the sons of the living God" at some time in the future.**

Recall also that the Apostle Paul quoted Hosea 2:23 in Romans 9:25:

> And I will sow her for Myself in the land, I will also have compassion on her who had not obtained compassion, and **I will say to those who were not My people, "You are My people!"** and they will say, "Thou art my God!" – Hosea 2:23
>
> As He says also in Hosea, "**I will call those who were not My people, 'My people,'** and her who was not beloved, 'Beloved.' " – Romans 9:25

In Hosea 2:23, God declared that He would not have compasssion on the house of Israel, but in the future, would "have compassion." Again, the Lord declared that although they were at one time not His people, in the future He would say to them, "You are My people."

In other words, **the forsaken, divorced, exiled house of Israel (not God's people) would once again be restored as God's people.**

Now, let's take Hosea's context and return to Paul's reference to Hosea in respect to those "from among the Gentiles" (Romans 9:24). **Paul identified those "from among the Gentiles" with the "My people" (9:25) and "sons of the living God." The "My people" and "sons of the living God" in Hosea were identified as the house of Israel.** They are one and the same people as "from among the Gentiles." Just as Hosea was referring to the house of Israel, so was Paul.

Remember the curse? God would remove His people from their land and scatter them "among the nations" (Gentiles). And He did remove the house of Israel and they were scattered or dispersed "among the nations." They became not God's people and were cast out of His sight, divorced and considered as outsiders to the covenants. **They became like the "Gentiles" or nations and**

they were identified as such. The house of Israel was considered as Gentiles – as the uncircumcised.

But God was going to have compassion on the house of Israel once again and restore them as His people – as sons of the living God! Furthermore, God was also going to restore the house of Israel and the house of Judah together:

> And **the sons of Judah and the sons of Israel will be gathered together,** and they will appoint for themselves one leader, and they will go up from the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel. – Hosea 1:11

These are the two groups that Paul is discussing in Romans 9: "Jews" and "Gentiles" or the house of Judah and the house of Israel, respectively.

Conclusion

Now we understand that the "Gentiles," and more specifically, those "among the Gentiles" are the lost sheep of the house of Israel and the "Jews" are the house of Judah representing national Israel at the time of Paul. The Apostle Paul clearly demonstrated in Romans 9:22-26 from his quotation from the prophet Hosea, that the "Gentiles" are indeed the cast off, divorced and exiled northern house of Israel. And he also confirmed by God's revelation through Hosea that the house of Israel would be restored and reconciled back to God, her Husband, and to their brethren, the house of Judah.

Please review now on page 87 the comparative summary diagram between what Paul and Hosea penned for us to reveal these truths.

Is Romans 9:22-26 the only testimony that the so-called "Gentiles" are the house of Israel? No. In the next chapter you will discover another testimony from the Apostle Peter of the same identity of the Gentiles as the house of Israel.

What Did You Learn? Test Yourself.

1. When was the house of Israel sent into captivity and exile by the Assyrian empire (see here)? _____

2. According to Hosea 1:6-8, who would receive "compassion" and who would not receive "compassion" (see here)?

   Would receive compassion:

   _____

   Would not receive compassion:

   _____

3. According to the Apostle Paul and his quotation from the prophet Hosea, who were the people identified as "from among the Gentiles" (Romans 9:24) (see here)?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

4. Who was going to be reconciled together according to Hosea 1:11 (see here)?

   _____

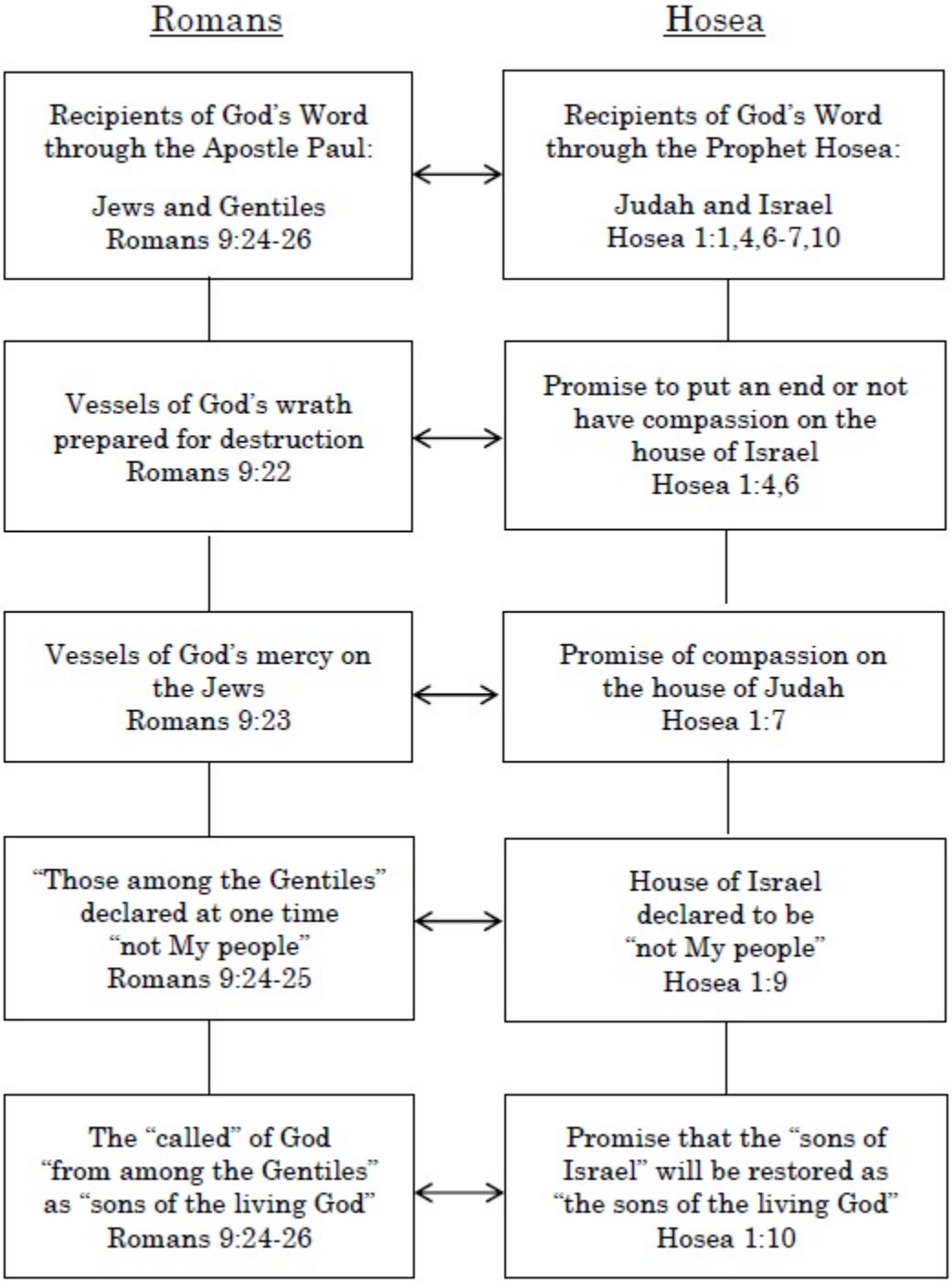
   and

   _____

Question to Think About

Why is the covenant that God made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob necessary to understand in respect to God's plan and purpose to restore the house of Israel and the house of Judah to Himself and to each other?

Paul – Hosea Comparison Chart


Romans
Hosea
Recipients of God's Word through the Apostle Paul:
Jews and Gentiles
Romans 9:24-26
Recipients of God's Word through the Prophet Hosea:
Judah and Israel
Hosea 1:1,4,6-7,10
Vessels of God's wrath prepared for destruction
Romans 9:22
Promise to put an end or not have compassion on the house of Israel
Hosea 1:4,6
Vessels of God's mercy on the Jews
Romans 9:23
Promise of compassion on the house of Judah
Hosea 1:7
"Those among the Gentiles" declared at one time "not My people"
Romans 9:24-25
House of Israel declared to be "not My people"
Hosea 1:9
The "called" of God "from among the Gentiles" as "sons of the living God"
Romans 9:24-26
Promise that the "sons of Israel" will be restored as "the sons of the living God"
Hosea 1:10

9

The Meaning of Gentiles According to the Apostle Peter

We discovered in the last chapter that the people who were scattered or dispersed "among the Gentiles" were the house of Israel according to the Apostle Paul. Now, we are going to look at what the Apostle Peter wrote as to the identity of the recipients of his letter who were "among the Gentiles" to see if that will be in agreement with Paul's understanding.

The Bible says, "On the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed" (Deuteronomy 19:15). This is a biblical principle that can be applied to any matter of life. Concerning the question of who the "Gentiles" are, we add a second witness to the Apostle Paul. So, let's get started in I Peter.

The Context of I Peter

Before we look at the main text of what the Apostle Peter had to say about the subject matter of the Gentiles, let's find out who he was writing to in I Peter.

> Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, **scattered** throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen… – I Peter 1:1

Notice that Peter was writing to those who were "scattered." This is a word that we have seen before. It comes from the Greek word *diaspora.* Let's review its meaning:

Meaning of Words:

What does "disperse" or "scatter" mean?

Definition: from #1289 (*diaspeiro*); *dispersion*, **the (converted) Israelite resident in Gentile countries**:- (which are) scattered (abroad).– *Strong's Greek Dictionary*

The noun form of *diaspeiro* is *diaspora* Strong's Greek #1290

Diaspeiro is used in the Greek Old Covenant Scriptures (*LXX*) in Deuteronomy 28:64, translated as "scatter." In the Hebrew it is the word *puts*.

Definition: *puts* "to scatter, disperse, be scattered." **Many references are made to Israel as a people and nation "being scattered" among the nations**, especially in the imagery of a scattered flock of sheep (Ezek. 34:5-6; Zech. 13:7). Ezekiel also promises the gathering together of this scattered flock: "…I will even gather you from the people, ….where ye have been scattered…" (Ezek. 11:17; 20:34,41). – *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, p. 217

Consistently throughout both the Old and New Covenant Scriptures, ***diasporia*** **refers specifically to the people of Israel that were scattered or dispersed in or among "Gentile countries."**

Of course, the meaning of this word is consistent with the promised curse that God would scatter or disperse Israel "among the nations" or Gentiles. And He did this to the house of Israel as we have already observed from the testimony of biblical and historical evidence.

The point is that in I Peter, Peter was writing to the dispersion which was the house of Israel "in Gentile countries."

Furthermore, Peter includes the people located in "Galatia" in I Peter 1:1. Paul also identified the churches in Galatia as Israelites:[1]

- They were under the "curse of the Law" (Galatians 3:13) and only Israel was given the Law of God (Deuteronomy 4:5-8; Psalm 147:19-20);
- They were considered "children of promise" (Galatians 4:28) that links them back to the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Galatians 4:21-28) with whom God made His promise that the anointed "seed" (Galatians 3:16) would come from Abraham's body, that is, Isaac; and
- They were called "the Israel of God" (Galatians 6:16).

Peter was writing to the "scattered" house of Israel located in Galatia as well as other places.

In addition to the above facts, Peter called the recipients of his letter:

> … a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession… – I Peter 2:9

Here Peter quotes from the concepts and words and phrases from the Old Covenant Scriptures that specifically identify Israel, the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Here are a few examples:

Chosen Race

For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your **God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession** out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. – Deuteronomy 7:6

O seed of Abraham, His servant, **O sons of Jacob, His chosen ones**! – Psalm 105:6

But you, **Israel, My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen,** descendant of Abraham My friend. – Isaiah 41:8

I have given water in the wilderness, and rivers in the dry land, to give drink to **my chosen race, my people** whom I have preserved to tell forth my praises. I have not now called thee**, O Jacob**; neither have I made thee weary, **O Israel**. – Isaiah 43:20-21 (*LXX*)

Priesthood & Holy Nation

And you shall be to Me **a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.** These are the words that you shall speak to **the sons of Israel**. – Exodus 19:6

God's Own Possession

For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for **His own possession** out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. – Deuteronomy 7:6

For the Lord has chosen Jacob for Himself, Israel for **His own possession**. – Psalm 135:4

Lastly, Peter referred to his readers as experiencing the same kinds of suffering as their "brethren." Brethren is the Greek word *adelphotes* (*Strong's Greek Dictionary* #81) and comes from *adelphos* (#80). As you may recall, *adelphos* means "born from the same womb." It's a word that consistently refers to the same family with the same ancestors. And elsewhere in the New

Covenant Scriptures, as well as in the context of I Peter, it can only refer to Israel, the physical descendants of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca and the twelve tribes of Jacob. Peter was addressing Israelites.

Peter was referring to the people of Israel. There are no other people that these verses refer to. He was writing to the dispersed house of Israel.

Peter Quotes Hosea

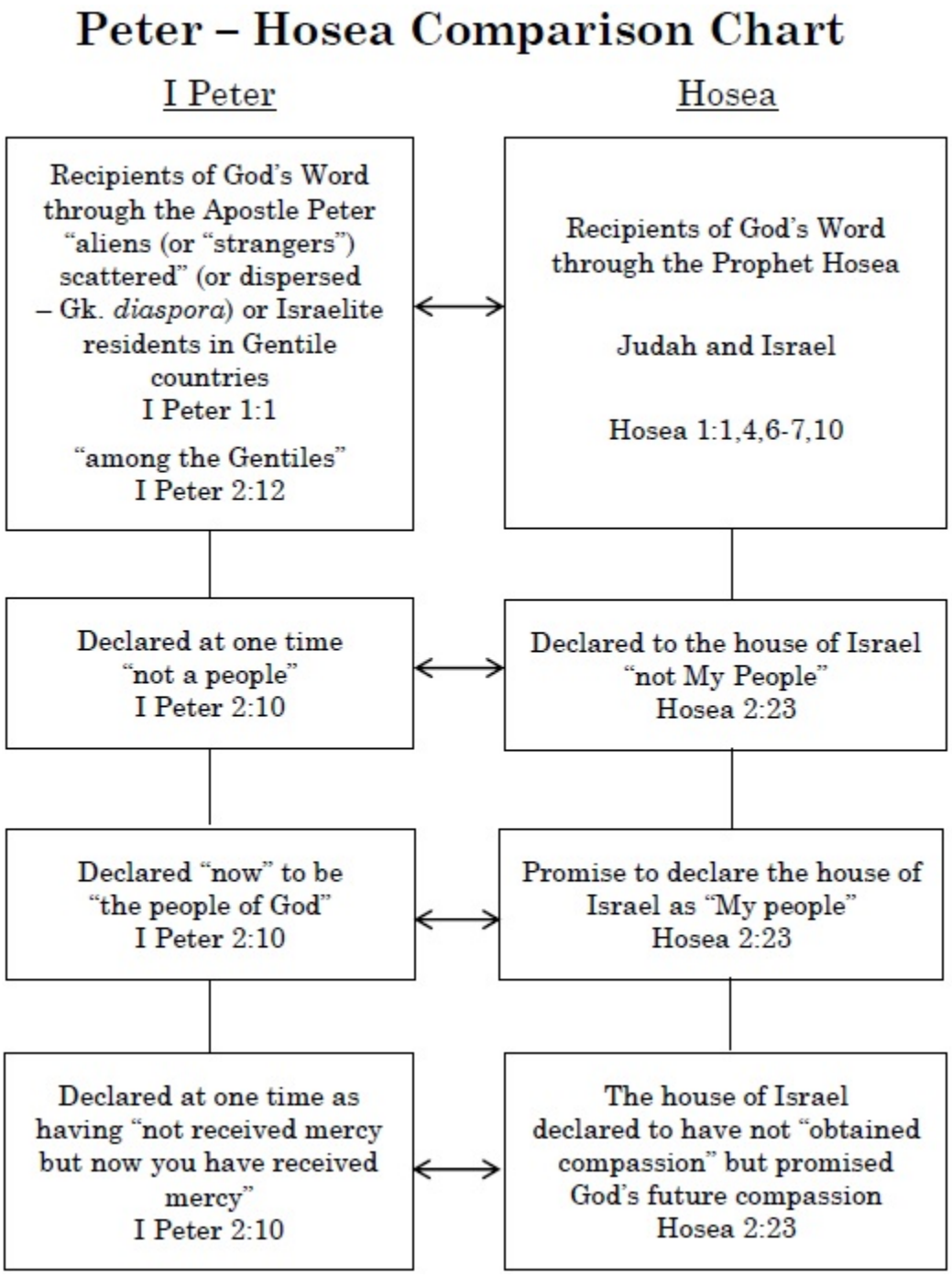
Not only does Peter refer to his readers as "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession" in I Peter 2:9, but in the very next verse, and in the same context, Peter lifts the same abbreviated quotations from Hosea just as Paul did in Romans 9:25-26:

> **For you once were not a people; but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.** – I Peter 2:10

As you will recall in the last chapter, the phrase "not My people" and those who are "My people" and those on whom God would "have compassion…who had not obtained compassion," all in Hosea 1:10 and 2:23, are **only the house of Israel**. Paul identified them as such and so did Peter.

The Gentiles were the house of Israel who were scattered (dispersed) among the nations. The God-forsaken house of Israel was now going to receive mercy through Jesus Christ who "Himself bore" their "sins in His body on the cross" (I Peter 2:24).

Consider the comparison chart below between Peter and Hosea.


Peter – Hosea Comparison Chart
I Peter
Hosea
Recipients of God's Word through the Apostle Peter "aliens (or "strangers") scattered" (or dispersed – Gk. *diaspora*) or Israelite residents in Gentile countries
I Peter 1:1
"among the Gentiles"
I Peter 2:12
Recipients of God's Word through the Prophet Hosea
Judah and Israel
Hosea 1:1,4,6-7,10
Declared at one time "not a people"
I Peter 2:10
Declared to the house of Israel "not My People"
Hosea 2:23
Declared "now" to be "the people of God"
I Peter 2:10
Promise to declare the house of Israel as "My people"
Hosea 2:23
Declared at one time as having "not received mercy but now you have received mercy"
I Peter 2:10
The house of Israel declared to have not "obtained compassion" but promised God's future compassion
Hosea 2:23

Conclusion

The Apostle Peter joins the Apostle Paul as a second witness to the fact that the "Gentiles" are the northern house of Israel who were cast off, divorced and scattered "among the nations." Let's

compare the unity and consistency of what Peter and Paul wrote about the identity of the so-called "Gentiles":

Peter	**Paul**
Addressed the "scattered" (or Israelites of the dispersion) in Gentiles countries.	Addressed "those among the Gentiles" who were also considered Gentiles.
Quoted Hosea to show that the "scattered" who were "among the Gentiles" were the house of Israel.	Quoted Hosea to show that "those among the Gentiles" or Gentiles were the house of Israel.

The context of both Peter and Paul along with Hosea testifies that they were all writing about the same people – the house of Israel. The true identity of those "among the Gentiles" is the house of Israel scattered among the nations.

What Did You Learn? Test Yourself.

1. The word "scattered" as Peter used it in I Peter 1:1 is defined by *Strong's Greek Dictionary* as (see here):

   "the converted _____ resident in Gentile countries."

2. Give three reasons why the Galatians whom Peter was writing to were Israelites (see here):

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. According to Peter and Hosea, who were those identified as at one time **not** God's people and now **are** God's people (see here)?

Question to Think About

In regard to determining the identity of the "scattered" (I Peter 1:1), in what ways were the two basic principles of interpretation applied? In other words, how was the context used and how did the use of other parts of the Bible help to find out who Peter was referring to as the "scattered"?

Conclusion

We discovered in this book the following evidenced and established facts to help us begin to understand God's plan and purpose:

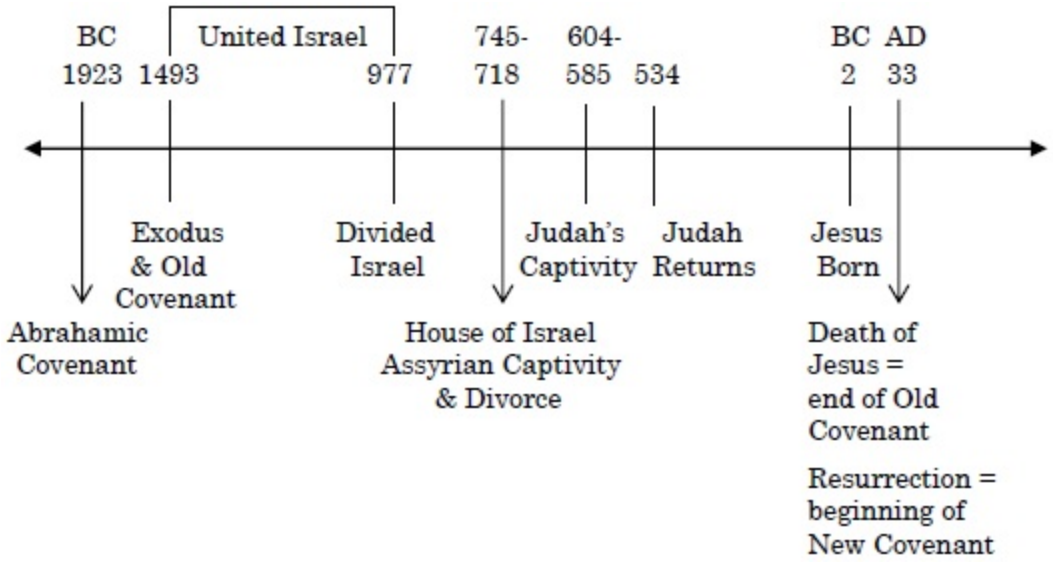
- God made certain unconditional covenant promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that also extended to their physical descendants.
- Their physical descendants were comprised of twelve tribes and called Israel.
- God delivered Israel out of Egyptian bondage and made a conditional covenant with them through Moses. It was a marriage covenant between God and Israel.
- That conditional covenant provided that if Israel obeyed the laws of God that they would be God's "Kingdom," His "holy nation," His "own possession" and be blessed.
- If Israel did not obey God's laws, they would be cursed.
- One of those curses was that God would scatter or disperse them into exile and captivity "among the nations."
- Many years after God made a conditional covenant with Israel, the nation of Israel was divided into the house of Israel (ten tribes in the north) and the house of Judah (two tribes in the south) with the Levites scattered throughout all twelve tribes.
- Both houses continually rebelled and disobeyed God.

- God finally pronounced His judgment on the house of Israel and scattered them "among the nations," exiling them into captivity by the nation of Assyria. God also sent all the fortified cities of Judah into captivity to Assyria.
- By this judgment, God also divorced the house of Israel so that they were no longer His covenant people. However, He did not divorce the house of Judah.
- Later, God also sent the rest of the house of Judah into captivity into Babylon, but only for 70 years and then a remnant returned to the land of Judea and Jerusalem.
- God prophesied through Jeremiah that He was going to make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.
- Through this New Covenant, God would reconcile both houses to Himself and to each other.
- This New Covenant was accomplished and ratified by the shed blood of Jesus Christ and by His death on the cross for the sins or transgressions of all the people of Israel which were committed under the first or Old Covenant.
- The Apostles Paul and Peter testified that the house of Israel was "the Gentiles" and the "scattered" or those dispersed "among the nations."
- Those from the house of Judah who returned to Judea from the Babylonian captivity were commonly known as "Judeans," often translated as "Jews." This designation by the English Bible translators continued in the New Covenant Scriptures.

- The name translated as "Jews" never referred to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob or the ten northern tribes of the house of Israel. It only referred to Judeans of the house of Judah or tribe of Judah or those living in the land of Judea.

Do you see the big picture here? Do you see that the Bible is a unified, consistent, non-contradictory story of one man's family? It's the story of God's calling and choosing of Abraham and his physical descendants – Isaac, Jacob and the twelve tribes of Israel. It's the unfolding historical drama of God's covenant relationship with one family line. It's the story of God's faithful, sacrificial love for His wife – the people of Israel – demonstrated ultimately in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ to reconcile them back to God and to each other.

Here is a snapshot timeline of this Bible story:



Once again, consider the harmony and interrelationship between the covenants and the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob:

- God's covenant with Abraham was the foundation for the Old Covenant He made with Israel through Moses.
- This Old Covenant with Israel was necessary for there to be a New Covenant through Jesus Christ. There would be no New Covenant had there not been an Old Covenant.
- And likewise, there would have been no need for a New Covenant except there was the unconditional covenant with Abraham that God promised to fulfill.
- All covenants reviewed in this book are directly and exclusively linked to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their physical descendants – the people of Israel.

Every covenant and every person in the family of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are connected together in one covenantal and family relationship. They are God's covenant people. That is what Genesis 12 through the New Covenant Scriptures is all about.

One Unconditional Covenant (God's covenant with Abraham and his physical descendants)

One Family (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob's family – Israel)

One Marriage Covenant (Old Covenant with national Israel)

One Redemption (release from Israel's captive condition)

One Salvation (for the sins committed by all Israel under the Old Covenant)

One Blood of the New Covenant (the seal of the renewed marriage covenant with Israel through Jesus' death)

One Purpose (God calling and choosing a specific people for Himself to be a Kingdom)

Two Questions Begging for Answers

So, if the foregoing conclusion and the documented facts in this book demonstrate that this is what the Bible says and means by what it says, and it's unmistakably clear, why is it that almost every pastor, church, and Bible scholar doesn't know it or believe it? How can intelligent people, who believe they know what the Bible says and means, say that:

- Abraham was a Jew;
- God made a New Covenant with every person on the planet;
- The Gentiles are everybody on the planet who is not a Jew?

Why? Good question.

Another question is this. Who are God's covenant people today? Who are the biblical Israelites? Are they the people who call themselves "Jews" today?

What people best fit the covenant promises? Who became a great nation and many nations? Who became a multitude of people? What people have historically responded to the New Covenant gospel of the Kingdom proclaimed by Jesus Christ and His Apostles? Could you be one of them?

Book Two in this series, *Identifying Biblical Israel Today: The Evidence* decisively answers these questions. Perhaps you are on the brink of discovering your own spiritual and family heritage. Yes, you could be on the path to discovering the purpose for which

you were created and how you fit into God's overall plan as you have never realized it before. Ready to take the next step? Book Two awaits you!

Summary of the *Covenant Heritage Series*

The *Covenant Heritage Series* is a set of seven books that will help you understand what the Bible says and what it means to you in regard to your heritage. The series examines the current critical issues of our time in light of what the Bible says. Finally, it offers biblical answers for transforming this world system back to God's original plan and purpose.

You will be challenged to re-examine what the majority consensus believes about the teaching of Scripture and the politically correct and religiously acceptable life perspectives and practices. The *Covenant Heritage Series* will provoke you to think! In the end, you will be able to decide for yourself what your ultimate purpose is and your consequential duties and obligations before the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

For more information go to:

www.YourBiblicalHeritage.com

Here is a Brief Synopsis of Each Book in Order:

Book One: *Discover the Story of Your Biblical Heritage: Laying the Foundation* (an overview of the progressive revelation of God showing that the Bible is written about, and for, one man's family from the Old Testament to the New Testament).

ISBN 978-0-9714328-2-6

Book Two: *Identifying Biblical Israel Today: The Evidence* (traces the migrations, heraldry, and languages from biblical Israel to the present day and presenting the best available information as to who the Jews are today).

ISBN 978-0-9714328-4-0

Book Three: *The Foundation and Fulfillment of The Old and New Covenant Scriptures: One Book – One People* (goes deeper into Scripture beyond Book One to show its unity and consistency).

ISBN 978-0-9714328-5-7

Book Four: *God's Covenant Creation: Adam's Race and Mandate* (a study of the meaning of Genesis 1-11 in the context of the rest of the Bible and an introduction as to God's purpose for creating Adam and who he was).

ISBN 978-0-9714328-6-4

Book Five: *The Greatest Deception of Our Time: Exposing the Doctrine of Diversity and Multiculturalism* (helping God's covenant people to understand the unbiblical and destructive doctrine of diversity and multiculturalism and how that has grossly and deceptively affected our understanding of the Bible and consequently, our world perspective).

ISBN 978-0-9714328-7-1

Book Six: *The Biblical Story of Prophecy: The Kingdom Established* (how our understanding of prophecy affects how we think today and how we respond to the issues of our day).
ISBN 978-0-9714328-8-8

Book Seven: *The Kingdom of God Manifested: Conquering the Kingdom of Darkness* (a review of what has gone wrong and biblical principles on how to realize the rule and reign of God in our lives, our families, our churches and nations).
ISBN 978-0-9714328-9-5

Identifying Biblical Israel Today: The Evidence

Covenant Heritage Series - Book Two

Following the presentation and conclusions of Book One, *Discover the Story of Your Biblical Heritage*, Book Two examines the historical evidence that positively identifies today's biblical Israelites. Are they the Jews who call themselves "Jews" today? Or, are they someone else? Which people fit the facts of the evidence that link them to the biblical Israelites today?

The topics that will be discussed in Book Two include:

- Migrations of biblical Israel
- Heraldry of biblical Israel
- Languages of biblical Israel
- Origins of the Jews
- The religion of the Jews
- The influence of the Jews
- And much more!

Let the evidence speak for itself and decide for yourself. Perhaps you will discover your own roots and come to understand your personal significance from your heritage.

For more information go to:

www.YourBiblicalHeritage.com

Answers

Chapter 1

1. a. nation
   b. families
   c. Canaan
   d. descendants or people
   e. nations
   f. kings
   g. enemies
2. Gentiles
3. False

Chapter 2

1. Ishmael
2. Jacob
3. True

Chapter 3

1. Israel
2. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob
3. physical….covenant
4. consecrated – distinct from the common or profane
5. loved….oath

Chapter 4

1. Saul

2. David
3. Rehoboam
4. Because Rehoboam did not answer them favorably but harshly, promising them severe discipline as their king.

Chapter 5

1. scatter
2. Assyria
3. divorce
4. 70 years

Chapter 6

1. house of Israel and house of Judah
2. New
3. The Old Covenant failed because Israel violated the terms of the covenant and because the blood of goats and calves could not cleanse the conscience from sin and guilt.
4. The sins of the house of Israel and the house of Judah (all Israel) which were committed under the first covenant.

Chapter 7

1. Judah (a son of Jacob and Leah), the tribe descended from Judah, the nation of the southern kingdom under the dynasty of David, and land of Judea.
2. Israel, Israel, Israel, Israel
3. Judean
4. not

Chapter 8

1. 718 BC

2. compassion = house of Judah
   no compassion = house of Israel
3. the house of Israel
4. the sons of Judah and the sons of Israel

Chapter 9

1. Israelite
2. a. they were under the curse of the law;
   b. they were considered children of promise and were descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and
   c. they were called the "children of God."
3. the house of Israel

Endnotes

INTRODUCTION

[1] Orthodox: of, pertaining to, or conforming to the approved form of any doctrine, philosophy, ideology, etc. ... conforming to beliefs attitudes or modes of conduct that are generally approved. – Dictionary.com (online). Orthodoxy is simply the consensus opinion of recognized authorities and experts of the day. That opinion may be true, correct and certain, or it may not be.

[2] Assume: 1. to take for granted or without proof. – Dictionary.com (online).

[3] Sequential [from sequence]: the following of one thing after another in chronological, causal, or logical order. – Victoria Newfeldt, Ed.in Chief, *Webster's New World Dictionary,* Third College Edition, New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1988.

[4] In Acts 17:10-12, the Apostle Paul preached "the word" to some of the people in Berea and the text says of them: "Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

CHAPTER 1

[1] Abram was a direct descendant of Shem, one of Noah's three sons. His genealogy is listed in Genesis 11:10-32. This will be studied more in Book Four of this series, *God's Covenant Creation*.

[2] God changed his name from Abram to Abraham by this time (Genesis 17:5).

[3] Etymology means derivation of a word…word origin. – Dictionary. reference.com.

[4] Progenitor: 1. a biologically related ancestor: a progenitor of the species... – Dictionary.com (online).

[5] Ernest, Jenni, Claus, Westermann, *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Vol. 1, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997, pp. 1-2.

[6] In the Greek version of the Old Testament Scriptures called the Septuagint or *LXX*, the word translated "nation" is *ethnos*. It is the Greek equivalent of

the Hebrew word *goy*. We'll take a look at *ethnos* later on in this book.

[7] The word "*gentilis*" was first used in the Latin Vulgate Bible, which was published by Jerome around 390 A.D.

[8] Robert Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the Old Testament*, Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978, p. 214.

[9] O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1980, p. 14.

[10] Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*, Grand Rapids, MI: Beacon Hill Press, 1967, p. 48.

CHAPTER 2

[1] Sovereign means: …Supreme or highest in power; superior to all others; chief; as, our sovereign prince. Independent of, and unlimited by, any other; possessing, or entitled to, original authority or jurisdiction; as, a sovereign state; a sovereign discretion. – *Webster's Online Dictionary.*

CHAPTER 3

[1] *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament,* Vol. II, pp. 787-788.

[2] Ordinances: a verdict pronounced judicially, espec. a sentence or formal decree, divine law – *Strong's Hebrew Dictionary* #4941. Thus, ordinances were supporting sub-laws with various applications to the Ten Commandments.

[3] Patriarch means: …The father and ruler of a family; one who governs his family or descendants by paternal right; -- usually applied to heads of families in ancient history, especially in Biblical history to those who lived before the time of Moses. – *Webster's Online Dictionary.*

CHAPTER 4

[1] There was a natural division within the united nation of Israel between Judah or the house of Judah in the south (which was comprised of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin) and the house of Israel which consisted of the remaining ten tribes in the north. As we will see, this division will become more definite and pronounced, but for now we include some references regarding this natural division within the united nation of Israel: I Samuel 11:8; 17:52; 18:16; II Samuel 2:10; 11:11; 12:8; 19:40-43. The tribe of Levi, which was the

priesthood, was scattered throughout all Israel (Numbers 18:20, Deuteronomy 14:27).

CHAPTER 5

[1] The meaning of "nations" will be expanded in Book Four, *God's Covenant Creation.*

[2] Samaria was the capital city of the house of Israel.

CHAPTER 6

[1] The Passover meal was first commanded by God for Israel to keep and would be a remembrance of God's protection from the last plague upon Egypt – the death of all the first born males. God "passed over" Israel whereby this plague did not adversely affect them. For a background on the Passover please read Exodus 11-12:32.

[2] Frederick William Danker, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1979, p. 117.

CHAPTER 8

[1] Book Two, *Identifying Biblical Israel Today: The Evidence,* documents the historical evidences regarding the migrations of the house of Israel after they had been deported to Assyria.

[2] Greeks were simply Greek-speaking Gentiles. See *Strong's Greek Dictionary* #1672.

[3] Harlotry: It's reasonable to assume that God was not commanding His prophet to marry a prostitute. "Harlotry," meaning an unfaithful wife, depicted the house of Israel's relationship to God. Hosea married a woman of the house of Israel, which house was a harlot in God's eyes. A "wife of harlotry" was simply representative of the unfaithful house of Israel.

CHAPTER 9

[1] Book Three, *The Foundation and Fulfillment of the Old and New Covenant Scriptures,* discusses Paul's letter to the Galatians more in-depth.

About the Book

The Bible is the unfolding revelation of God's purpose and plan to establish and manifest His Kingdom through unconditional covenant promises to one man and his physical offspring.

Until that is understood, by examining the biblical evidence of the historical sequence of God's working in and through this one man's family line through covenant relationship, the meaning of the Holy Scripture from Genesis to Revelation is closed to your understanding as to what it says and what it means by what it says.

- Lawrence Blanchard

What You Will Learn:

- Why God's unconditional covenant with Abraham is foundational to all the rest of the covenants of the Bible;
- The historical and critical relevance of the two houses within the nation of Israel;
- The exclusive beneficiaries of the New Covenant in Jesus Christ; and...
- The biblical identity of the "Jews" and "Gentiles" as it relates to Abraham and his physical descendants.

Discover the Story of Your Biblical Heritage (Book One) takes you step by step through the pages of the Bible in a historical approach that helps you discover for yourself this

amazingly consistent and unified story of God's working through this family line.

About the Author

Lawrence Blanchard, N.D., M.Div. has been studying and teaching the Bible for over 30 years and holds a master's degree from Denver Seminary.

He is committed to the Bible as the authoritative word of God and to helping others discover for themselves what the Bible means by what it says.